

THE BUVYER

Saturday, July 29, 1871.



"What is it you would have me do?"—p. 677.

TRIED.

BY F. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "A STORY OF VIONVILLE."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE beautiful summer had passed away; at least from the fair English landscapes that had looked so smiling under the radiant sunshine, and now all seemed growing dim and cold under

the chill breath of autumn, that with a voice mournful and yet hopeful, spoke of the decay and ultimate perishing of all things earthly, and bade the fading nature prepare for the death-sleep of

winter, that would surely lead it to the resurrection spring.

It was evening, and there was mist and gloom over the quarry lands with which May Bathurst had parted to make a provision for her happy rival, who had now for some time been the happy wife of Sydney Leigh. Through the open door of a cottage, standing at some little distance from any other habitation, the damp grey vapour could be seen swathing the rocks as in a shroud, and over its low thatched roof the wind went moaning with a perpetual plaint, as if it knew some secret of mysterious sadness which men could only vaguely comprehend.

The hut was outwardly precisely like those of the quarry men, which were scattered in every nook where they would be safe from the operation of blasting the rocks, which was going on every day; but internally it showed many traces of at least the refinement of intellect, though anything like luxury had been carefully excluded from it. The walls of the only sitting-room, which opened at once on the road, were covered with books, almost all of which were works on theology. The table was well supplied with writing materials, and a small harmonium stood in one corner; but this was all the furniture it contained, excepting two or three wooden chairs of the commonest description. On one of these sat Philip Evans, with his arms folded on the table before him, and his head laid down upon them, so that his face was quite concealed.

It was with this man an hour of utter despondency. Such hours are the inevitable portion of all who have given their lives and energies and powers to work for the invisible kingdom of their Master—so long as they have not yet shaken off the burden of the flesh, that hinders them from seeing the fruits of their labour as they are known of God.

There was perfect silence in the cottage, broken only by the half-sobbing breath that rose from Evans's heaving chest, but he was too much absorbed in thought to hear a footfall near him. A hand laid on his shoulder roused him with a start. He looked up, and springing to his feet, while a gleam of joy illuminated his dark countenance, he exclaimed, "Fleming, my dear friend, what an unexpected pleasure!"

"I knew I should take you by surprise," said Dr. Fleming, shaking him warmly by the hand, "but I received a letter last night which made me so excessively anxious to see you, that I took the first train from town, and have neither eat nor slept since I left home, in my intense desire to reach your hut."

"Then you must have food before you even tell me your errand," said Evans, going towards a little cupboard in the wall.

"I will not refuse it for two reasons," said Fleming, smiling, "first, because I stand in need of it; secondly, because I have some curiosity to know on

what sort of hermit fare you sustain that gaunt frame of yours."

"This is all I can offer you at present," said Evans, placing some bread and cheese before him.

"And I suppose that upon this you breakfast, dine, and sup for the excellent reason that it requires no cooking?" said Fleming.

Evans gave a faint smile without answering, and sitting down, he passed his hand wearily over his forehead, and relapsed into silence till Fleming had finished his repast. The doctor was keenly observing him all the time, and when he pushed away his plate, he said, gravely, "You are completely worn out, Evans, you have been doing too much. I dare say you are chafing to go back to your work at this moment, but you may rest assured I am doing you a great service by keeping you idle for a few hours."

"You are at least doing me no harm, for I question whether my work, wretched and imperfect as it is, has ever been of the smallest use to any one."

Fleming raised his eyebrows with a very significant movement, and said, after a moment's silence, "You are about the last man who would allow me or any one to tell you what your work has really been, and what it has accomplished, so I will not attempt it. You will know it one day, my friend, and may my place be at your feet in that hour," he added, in a low tone. "You are perhaps hardly aware how much physical exhaustion has to do with your present state of mind. But come, let me tell you what has brought me here; as it happens, it concerns one on whom you once wrought as grand a work as ever was accomplished in a human soul."

"And a work which has not endured: is it not that which you have come to tell me?" said the preacher, looking up with all the keenness and animation of his usual expression restored to his countenance.

"No," said Fleming, earnestly, "I trust that, at least, is not the case, though the fire you once kindled may be burning low; but I see you guess of whom I would speak."

"Of May Bathurst—I knew it so soon as your foot crossed the threshold—my friend," he added, very softly. "If you have come to speak to me of her, it is better you should understand I have always known the truth, that she is dearer to you than your own life."

"She is—Heaven help me!" said Fleming, letting his face drop on his hands; "nor that only," he continued, after a few minutes; "but she is the only one for me in all the world. I am a lonely man, I have no other love on earth."

"Take care that it trenches not on the love due only in regions beyond the earth," said Evans, sternly.

"It is, perhaps, happily for me, too hopeless to bring me into much danger in that respect. Evans, since you know the truth, as I might have guessed from your keen penetration you would come to know

it, it will be better that I should now tell you all from the beginning, you will then be able to appreciate the full import of the errand which brought me here to-night."

Evans bowed his head in assent, and Fleming with a deep-drawn sigh went on: "It may seem folly for a man of fifty, like myself, to say that already for some years I have devotedly loved a woman so young as May Bathurst; but it is true. The rare nobleness of her character developed itself at a very early age, and her intellectual depth caused her to pass out of childhood much sooner than other girls of her standing. She has been earth's one jewel to me for a long time past, but from the first I knew that she was not for me. Her father had no secrets from me, and he told me that he had promised her to Sydney Leigh, and I soon saw that May had given her young heart to him, with as utter an abandonment as the opening flower yields up its fragrance to the morning sun, so I never had a ray of hope; but I thought to solace my desolation by the sad pleasure of watching over her happiness, and promoting it so far as I was able. To this end I made inquiries about Sydney Leigh from friends of my own in India, and what I heard of him made me tremble for May's future welfare. He was described to me as a luxurious, pleasure-loving man of the world, wholly devoid of religious principle, but with a refinement of mind and kindness of disposition which rendered him extremely attractive to all who knew him. I went down to Combe Bathurst, with some intention of undertaking the delicate and difficult task of opening May's eyes to his real character, but I found that she idealised him into a being so totally different from what he really was, that I never doubted when she came to know him she would herself cancel her engagement with a man so unworthy of her, especially if the higher life which yet lay dormant in her soul—the life of the love of God—could be awakened in her, and so provide her with a sure safeguard against one who was a complete alien to Christ. It was at that time that I discovered the neglected condition of the quarry men here, and wrote to ask you to come and establish a mission amongst them; but I will own to you now, Evans, that my underlying thought and motive was the hope that you would prove the messenger of Christ and his eternal peace to my precious May, and my hope was realised. After her father's death, she wrote herself to tell me of the change you had wrought in her, and from that moment I felt no fear that she would allow herself to become the wife of Sydney Leigh, for I would not suppose it possible she could ever think it right to link herself to a man who is practically an infidel. I was, alas! mistaken; much as I love her, I must own that in this May Bathurst was TRIED and found wanting. When I heard that Leigh had come home, I wrote and asked you to warn her, and you did so—but in vain."

"Yes, in vain," said the preacher, in a voice harsh with painful feelings; "and could the foundation I laid have been solid and true, if it was thus blown to the winds by the breath of a few loving words from a man to whom she should never have listened?"

"I think—I hope so," exclaimed Fleming, eagerly. "One failure is not apostasy. God has been dealing hardly with her, as with a soul he loves, and she has acted nobly since; she has shown a self-abnegation and generosity which must have sprung from a source divine. You know what has happened to her now?"

"I know that Sydney Leigh has married another woman, and I gave God thanks for her escape."

"Yes, so could I at the last, but there was a time when I felt differently. I read the man's utter faithlessness long before May even suspected it herself, and I could not master my burning indignation at the idea that her devoted, trusting love was to be betrayed for the sake of a fair-faced girl, whom her gentle charity had rescued from misery and loaded with benefits. Further, I deeply dreaded the effect of that betrayal on her high, pure character and warm heart; there is danger for such a one as May Bathurst in a shock to faith, even in earthly goodness and truth alone. I will own to you that on one day I did my best to hurry on her marriage with Leigh, and to avert the catastrophe I saw impending."

"Therein you were wrong."

"Yes, but at the moment scarcely wilfully so; for I did believe the discipline of trial which a marriage with such a man would have surely brought to her, would have been better for her than to have her soul withered by the bitterness of a boundless trust betrayed—a generous love flung back upon her heart as worthless and rejected; and in truth the effect on her has been almost all I feared; but for the time my effort to hold her back from the abyss of misery, towards which she was walking on in her blindness with smiles that wrung my heart, was quite unavailing. A few days more and she had fallen from her height of happiness to a desolation which, so far as this world is concerned, must be complete. I have never seen her since. From the moment that she saw Sydney Leigh loved another woman, she took herself out of his life with a proud generosity, which not only freed him from all obligations to herself, but by personal sacrifice effected his union with her rival."

"It was a source of regret to me when I heard that the quarry lands had passed from her hands to those of Sydney Leigh," said Evans, "because I could not look to him for the fitting care of the living beings congregated on them, as I could to her; but for that I cannot blame her."

"No, indeed, and I have not time to tell you of the rare delicacy with which she made her noble arrangements for the happiness of those who had destroyed her own. You could not but admire her, hard as

you are, Evans, if you knew all; but I must hurry on. Mrs. Leigh died the day after the wedding of her nephew and Miss Clive, and the tidings of both events reached May Bathurst first from the columns of a newspaper, which she took up accidentally in a hotel at Malta. From the moment of her aunt's death, I felt that there was no one but myself left on earth to care for her, and I have anxiously endeavoured, in every way that I could think of, to obtain tidings of her real condition. I wrote to herself, to tell her how deeply I grieved for the loss she had sustained, and received an answer from her, containing but a few lines, sweet and gentle, thanking me for my kind words, but saying not a syllable about herself. I had also written, however, to Mrs. Denton, the lady who is travelling with her, and in her reply she said that Miss Bathurst appeared to have received an overpowering shock, by the tidings she had seen in the newspaper. I felt very uneasy at this statement, and wrote again at once to Mrs. Denton to make further inquiries, but they were moving from place to place, and the letter did not reach her for many weeks. It was only last night that I received the answer to it, and it is that which has brought me here. I wish you to read it, Evans."

"Then I must get a light," said the preacher, rising; for the two men had been so absorbed in their conversation that they had not observed how the shadows had deepened round them till complete darkness had fallen upon the cottage, and rendered them invisible to each other.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EVANS lighted a lamp, which he placed in the centre of the little table that stood between himself and Fleming, and the rays fell with vivid effect on the faces of the two men, so unlike in form and feature, and yet very similar in their earnestness of expression and in the tokens of force of character strongly marked on the countenances of both. They had been fast friends since they were young then in the same college at Cambridge, and it was to Philip Evans, already in those days ardently devoted to the faith of Christ, that Fleming owed the deep practical religion which had made him throughout his career almost as much a physician of the soul as of the body. They did not often meet, for both were fully occupied, and Evans at least allowed no human friendship to interfere with his entire devotion to his Master's work. When they did come together, it was generally Fleming who sought his counsel, as on the present occasion; but their attachment to each other was so true and lasting that full confidence was always maintained unbroken between them, however long their separation might be.

"Mrs. Denton is not gifted with any great amount of common sense," said Fleming, as he put the letter into the preacher's hand, "but she is a good woman,

and sincerely attached to May Bathurst; and the somewhat inane simplicity of her letter, seems to me to convey a painfully true picture of her friend's real state."

Evans took the letter, and while he read it, Fleming remained with his eyes intently fixed on his face, striving to read thereon the impressions conveyed by its contents. It was written from Athens, and was dated about ten days previously, it being then late in the month of November.

"DEAR DR. FLEMING,—I was very glad to hear from you, though your letter was six weeks old when I got it, and I think a great number of Rebecca's letters must be wandering about the world, for I have only had one from her; but I am not altogether sorry to lose them, for she seemed so very cross when she wrote it. But as I was saying, I was pleased to hear from you, because I have been very much troubled in my mind about dear Miss Bathurst, and as you are a physician perhaps you can tell me what is the matter with her. You must know that when we first left England she seemed most extraordinarily restless. She could hardly bear to be two nights together in the same place; and when, for the sake of giving me the rest I often required, she remained in any town for a day or two, she would herself spend the whole time making the most fatiguing expeditions on foot or horseback, coming back quite exhausted, and yet looking the next morning as if she had not slept an hour. I do not think that she really cared for the old ruins or the beautiful views she went so far to see; for when I have been with her at some interesting spot, she would stand ever so long apparently gazing upon the landscape, but with a look in her eyes all the time as if she were really, in thought, seeing something very far away.

"At last we got to Malta, where we waited a few days for the steamer that was to take us to Athens. May had said from the first she wished to go to Greece; and I think it had somehow an attraction for her, as being the land from which the beautiful Miss Clive had come who married her cousin, Mr. Leigh, though why she should wish that young lady recalled to her mind I cannot imagine, for there seems to me something very odd in her having become the wife of the gentleman I always thought May was engaged to. Well, one day at Malta Miss Bathurst came in, after having been out for hours in the burning sun; she was very flushed and tired, and sat down by the table on which the waiter had just laid an English newspaper. She took it up and began to glance it over, and presently I said, 'My dear, is there any news?' for we had been wandering about so much that we had not received a single letter since we left England. She did not answer; then I looked at her, and I quite screamed when I saw her, for she seemed to have changed into a marble statue. She was perfectly white and cold, and her eyes were fixed and staring. I went up to her and touched her, exclaiming, 'My dearest May, what is the matter?' She did not seem to hear me till I repeated my question several times. At last she slowly turned her great eyes round upon me, and said in a strange set voice, 'Sydney Leigh is married to Irene Clive, and my aunt is dead, the only person to whom my life could have been a pleasure or a benefit any more.' Then she rose and went out of the room, and did not come down again that day or the next. The third morning I insisted on going to her room to see how she was, and she said at once she would come down, and she did, but so changed! Instead of being restless, and rushing about from place to place, she sat all day in a quiet corner of the room doing nothing and never speaking, only with her eyes wide open looking out from her white face as if she were thinking, thinking incessantly. When I spoke to her she would answer in monosyllables, and seemed to have no longer any wish or plan. When the Athens steamer came, I asked her if she did not mean to go there, as we had written the week before to take rooms in one of the hotels, and she said, 'Oh yes, let us go, if you like,' and she did go on board at once in the same mechanical sort of way.

"We arrived here, and have remained in this strange old town more than three months, and May continues precisely in

the same state; her life knows no change from day to day. Every morning she goes out, for it seems to be always fine weather in this climate, and she sits down in a solitary place at the foot of one of the pillars of the Temple of Jupiter, which I ought to tell you is an ancient ruin, with several columns still standing, sixty feet high. There she sits, and seems to watch the shadows changing on the plain before her till twilight falls, and then she comes home and goes to her room, and I see her no more till the next day, when she does just the same over again. I said to her once, 'I really think, May, you have grown into one of those white statues of which there are so many here,' and she answered in such a strange manner, 'No, there is a great difference between them and me, for they cannot remember or feel.' Another time I asked her what were her plans for the future, and she said, 'I have no plans, except to wait here till death comes'; and when I begged her not to talk in that way, she looked up at me wearily and said, 'If you wish to go back to England, Mrs. Denton, do not think anything more about me; I shall be quite safe alone.' But of course I should not think of leaving her, poor dear child, and indeed I have not the slightest wish to go away from Athens, for I like it extremely. There is a charming English lady here, married to a Greek gentleman, and she is very kind to me, and asks me often to her house, and as she has ten children who can all speak English, I can talk as much as I like. Also, I confess, it is a great relief not to have to think about Rebecca's temper, so I am well pleased to remain; but I wish you would write and tell me what your opinion is of Miss Bathurst's state, after the description I have given you of her.

"Believe me sincerely yours,

"SOPHIA DENTON."

The preacher had read through in silence the whole of the long, closely-written letter; and then he laid it down on the table, keeping his hand upon it, while the vivid expression of some strong feeling animated his dark stern face, and lit a gleam of strange fire in his eyes.

Fleming looked at him in undisguised anxiety, and finding he did not speak, he said at length—“Evans, tell me what you think of May's condition?”

Then the clear deep voice rang out with burning indignation in its tone:—“I think that she who once dedicated herself to the crucified Lord, has forsaken and forsaken him who loved her unto the death—who left the heaven of heavens for her—who bought her with his life—to mourn and pine over the loss of a man she should, at the first, have cast

from her as an evil thing—the most evil thing the world contains—an enemy to Christ!”

“You are a man of hard judgment, Evans,” said Fleming, in a tone of exceeding pain; “but surely this poor child may have more merciful measure than you would mete out to her? Is it not plain that the sudden betrayal of the love which was her earthly life, and the extinction of the last duty which seemed to hold her bound to this world, have together plunged her mentally and spiritually in a lethargy wherein her soul scarcely lives at all?”

“And is that a righteous condition in the sight of God for a responsible being, fashioned by his hand?” said the preacher, bending his stern eyes on his friend.

“No!” answered Fleming; “but much is due to the reaction after the tremendous pressure and excitement of the first few days, which followed her discovery of Leigh's treachery—when she strained every nerve to procure the realisation of his happiness with her rival. And in any case, Evans, shall it continue? Shall this precious soul remain in unrighteous apathy for want of a voice of power to rouse her out of it, and show her the wrong she is doing to herself and the kingdom of her Master by such a death in life as that into which she has allowed herself to fall? I believe that if one speaking to her with authority in the name of Christ, were to open out to her the revelation of God's dealings with her for this past year, she would rise out of her sore trial a brighter, truer, purer, servant of God than she could ever have been without it.”

The preacher looked keenly into his friend's eyes. “Fleming, what is it you would have me do?”

“Go to her!” exclaimed Fleming, flinging out his arms with a gesture of entreaty.

And the preacher, bringing his dark eyes with a certain softness of expression to rest on his friend's anxious face, answered, “I will go. Who can tell how transcendently precious in the sight of God is that one poor struggling soul!”

(To be continued.)

THE FEET OF JESUS.

CHAPTER VI.—MARY AT JESUS'S FEET.—PART II.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF “THE ‘I WILLS’ OF THE PSALMS,” ETC. ETC.

MARTHA wished Christ to be served in her own way; she was intent on it. It may be that, in part, she was under the influence of her natural character as an active housewife, and wished that all that housewifery could do should be put forth; but then it was for the honour of her Lord. Those dishes were to be dressed for and set before him. And, so far, the thought was good.

Overstrained good may, however, become evil; some of the most subtle and best-masked evil is nothing but this; and Martha so magnified her own position and work as to have no eye for, no understanding of, Mary's.

She had no calm judgment; and probably, after some waiting, and some considerable preliminary kindling of the fire, at last she spake with her tongue, and ran, so to speak, full tilt against Christ himself. “Carest thou not” (*οὐ μέλει* is

it nothing to thee) "that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Martha did what many a one attempts now—she tried to enlist Christ in her quarrel; she would have made him a partisan.

Martha thought she was strong in the feeling and judgment which he must have on the matter, and in the claims of human relationship—"my sister," "me;" yes, and in the mixed feelings of indignation, and justice, and pity, which are summed up in the word "alone;" and, in truth, the onslaught was severe; and, had there not been something more powerful to counteract it, must have prevailed.

Like Martha, we are often going further than we think; we are unconsciously, but really, wounding Christ himself. We are for dragging him into conflicts which are utterly distasteful to him; we are arguing petty claims of our own, and bringing them into competition with his; my sister—my husband—my wife—what they have to do with me, and not what they have to do with Christ.

The defence of this position by Christ was a discriminating and a decided one.

Jesus did not ignore Martha; he noted all about her, and defined her position, as well as Mary's. The perception and statement of Mary's immeasurable superiority did not induce him to pour contempt on Martha, whose fault was, not work, but being overburdened in it. Here, Jesus gave us the true rule of action. We must never despise, never ignore, the position of an adversary, or the adversary himself; on the contrary, we must enter as far as possible into his views of matters before we judge them.

Jesus notes that Martha would have supplied him with many things—for whom were they all, but for himself?—but they brought on her care and trouble: she let her natural energy, no doubt, go out into them, but it had overwhelmed her.

Jesus knows the caring and the troubled ones, as well as those who are in deeper fault. On the one side, he will not fail to condemn an error because it is entertained on his behalf; on the other, he will not, because it is an error, refuse to give credit for what there is in it of good.

But Jesus was very decided—it "shall not be taken away from her." I will not take her good part away from her—you shall not—circumstances must not.

No; Jesus will never send us forth from himself to be drawn round in a whirlpool. I do not say he will not send us forth in proper season to work, even as he did the demoniac; but he will not fall in with the mistakes of energetic people, as they would wish. Martha would have involved Mary in the same whirl that she was in herself. Therefore, there is great encouragement here to our aiming at some close communion with the Lord. He will not send us away. He knows the longing of our

souls—that we are craving to be fed and taught of him—that we feel none can satisfy us but himself; and blessed are such hungry ones, for they shall be filled.

Thus, they who gather themselves in to rest in Christ have no need to fear that they will be unduly disturbed by him. At the proper time he will send them forth to their work, as he did the demoniac, but he will not have them vexed for every excitement that comes in the way. And as he will not himself take away the rest of his people, no more will he allow others to do so. Martha sought a commission so to do to Mary, but Jesus refused to give it.

And there are some who seem to have a vocation for stirring up everybody, and almost everything too. They know neither the power nor the pleasure of rest; their tremendous energy, or their irritable restlessness, would carry away, or fret others, whose chief power and life is in the peace of God; from such we may take refuge in Christ himself.

But he will do even more than this—he will defend us from circumstances. He says, "They also shall not take you from peace."

Now, it often happens that circumstances appear to involve great need, and to call upon us to engage in them. But is this need always so real? Is the necessity invariably laid on us? Some persons think so, and the consequence is that they scatter themselves, and lose their self-possession, and become shallow. They are to be found in everything; they are in things, but where are they in themselves?

The apparent need is not always a real one; it was not so here. Had it been, Christ would have sent Mary at once to her sister's help; but he refused to fall in with Martha's mistake. Christ discriminated and judged in this matter, and he will teach us to do the same.

But the Lord's defence of Mary was reasonable, as well as decided. It might be said, "Was not Mary to be jealous of the honour of the house as well as Martha; of its hospitality; of Christ's having the very best in every way which it could afford—that best, made the best indeed by all the care and pains which they could bestow upon it?"

Yes, Mary was as jealous of the honour of the house as Martha; but she had so overpassed her in spiritual apprehension that she knew that, to be at the Saviour's feet was more acceptable to him than to be engaged in preparing many dishes for him.

She had not grasped the great outlines of truth any more clearly or boldly than Martha—the eleventh chapter of John would teach us that; but the spiritual perceptive faculty was more delicate with her, and it enabled her to discriminate between seeming neglect and real honour.

Mary was, in truth, giving far more than Martha

—she was giving her very self, in that form which is most precious to Christ, as a receiver of himself.

In the last day it will come out how much some have given—some who were little known in outward activities.

And great encouragement may be gathered here for those who have not much outward to give. Some are prevented by illness, by circumstances, from doing much. We do not say their case is that which is spoken of here, but that they also may gather incidentally some comfort.

Every one who has himself, has much to give; every one who can appreciate Jesus, listen to him, choose him, lovingly trust him, has, in all that, opportunity of honouring the Lord. Such may be misunderstood, or possibly despised, by the world, but they will be vindicated by him.

Had we not intended to speak of the Lord separately, some of what we are now about to say would have been noticed when considering Mary. Jesus himself was mistaken and misjudged. "Is it nothing to thee?" said Martha. She had formed a wrong judgment of Christ. She did not see those deeper interests, that greater honour, that profounder relationship, which he did, and which he recognised by keeping Mary at his feet.

This is exactly how it comes to pass that we so often wrong the Lord. It is simply out of shallowness and ignorance.

We, in point of fact, often say to him, "Dost thou not care? is it nothing to thee?" Because he is not acting for us, or by us, as we will, we charge him with thoughtlessness of us.

"That my sister hath left me to serve alone." She only saw her sister in relationship to herself—not to Christ—and put in her claims accordingly. No doubt it was in order that Christ should be served with the "many things" that Martha wanted Mary's help, but she brings herself, as left, prominently forward, and in the mention of "my sister"—the human relationship—we see a claim put in, in competition with Christ's.

If mere man had been in the Lord's place, knowing as much of his own real claims as He did, how differently would he have acted. He would, in all probability, have fired up in indignation—he would have asserted the claims of his personal dignity. But Jesus vindicates Mary and not himself. He passes by the personal affront—"dost thou not care?"—and throws his shield over the one who sat listening at his feet.

Jesus was here, as ever, forgetful of his mere self. So far as principle was involved, and truth, he vindicated them by the way in which he spoke of the better part; but he did not notice Martha's attack upon himself.

There are many teachings for us in this.

We are taught to vindicate truths rather than

ourselves—to pass by what is merely personal, even though it be unjust. This is very hard to do; still Jesus did it, and that often under circumstances of great provocation. Let us try to do the same.

We see here how he put the hunger and thirst of Mary's soul, and its refreshment, before those of his own body, and its entertainments—his contentment with what was simple—his forgetfulness of self in the willing loss of an elaborate feast. Martha—if she could have seen it, together with Mary at his feet, and but a single dish to satisfy hunger—would have been more acceptable to Jesus than all the preparations which both Martha and Mary could have made.

And so there is great encouragement to us to invite Jesus in our poverty. However humble may be our circumstances, if we have ourselves to give, we have what he requires, for he seeks not ours, but us.

And it is important to observe his recognition of the worth of that which is communicable from him. He vindicates those who are appreciating him, not feebly, or theoretically, or as a matter of course, but in the full power of the consciousness of how wise they are—what good they get.

He knows that they get good from him as distinguished from channels; that there is a deep need of our union with his very personality; that there is a communion with himself which is independent of all channels; and with the full presence of these before the mind, He defends those who appreciate being near his very self.

It is of as much importance to us that Christ should know how well he can supply, as that he should know how great is our need; his riches, as well as our want. For he will always put the two together; each would be strong alone; but each acquires fresh, yes, doubled strength, when brought into connection with the other.

And it will be well for us to act on this knowledge. Let us often plead Christ's wealth with him; let us bring it forward as a reason why much should be poured out to us; let it excite our expectation. The more people have on earth, the more is expected from them; the more we know of Christ's wealth, the more should we expect from him.

We should not stop at ever thinking about our poverty. We may think about this until we grow morbid; until we have no capacity for thinking of anything higher; until we are so depressed, that we come to content ourselves with bearing it. But Jesus would not have us content in this; he never says, "Know thyself to be poor," unless it be to add, "that I may make thee rich." When he corrects the mistake of the Laodiceans, and tells them that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, he adds, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,

that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Jesus is too considerate, too tender-hearted, too noble, to remind us of our deep poverty, unless he were willing to relieve it.

We can believe that Jesus thinks with great happiness of all the fulness and riches in himself; that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And in this thought of his fulness and exceeding wealth his people have large place. It is all for them. The true secret of pleasure in the possession of wealth, is to have it for the purpose of giving. The pleasure of hoarding is a pleasure of sin. Jesus hoards nothing;

what he has, and is communicable to his people, he does communicate; and doing this is joy to him.

A part of the defence of Mary consisted also in Christ's visibly bearing that she should in one sense leave him unserved; in his allowing the position she took up. He was content to forego the lesser, for he knew that the greater was present.

And Jesus is the same now as he was in Mary's time; he will be to us even as he was to her. There are invisible and quiet receptions and teachings now, even as there were at Bethany, when Mary sat at Jesus's feet.

FROM DAWN TO DARK.

I.

OFF mornings, when I draw my blind,
And fill the chamber with the sky,
Through welcoming roses comes a wind
I've known for many a year gone by:—
"Up and away!" it seems to say,
"The world is full of joy and light;
And I'll attend you all the day,
Till night."

II.

Of evenings, when the new moon beams
Above the garden's sycamore-tree,
A bird, awaked from leafy dreams,
Begins its whispered song to me:—

Notes, that like a crystal bell,
Beating in the airy deep,
Seem to say:—"Sleep—'tis well—
Sleep—sleep."

III.

Such are the muses who inspire
The happiest hours existence brings;
The wind of morning wakes my lyre,
The bird of evening stills its strings
Brief is the life we have to live,
Soothing our cares on Nature's breast,
With song; and waiting death to give
Us rest.

T. C. IRWIN.

THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE'S George Baylis just coming in at the gate," said Maria, in the afternoon.
"Well, you two girls must entertain him," said Mrs. Deene. "Emily and I promised to go and meet the boys at the Zoological Gardens; they said they should leave at four, and it's three now, so we must make haste," and Mrs. Deene and her youngest daughter departed as the artilleryman entered.

"I wish he hadn't come just now," observed Maria, "I wanted to try over that new piece before Mr. Dyce comes this evening. He fidgets so about the time when I don't know anything perfectly. Can't you manage to keep George in the dining-room for half an hour, Chatty?"

"Very well."

So he was shown into that apartment, where he found Chatty quietly mending her gloves.

"Never do for Harold to see me with holes in them," she thought; "he'd think me a slattern, and give me up as a bad speculation. How I am going to meet him this evening is a mystery to me as yet. There you are, George! You must put up with my society for half an hour; Maria wants to practise a new piece for the edification of Prawn this evening, and can't do it if we are there, and all the others are out."

"Oh, it's quite a treat!"

"What, to find them all out? Polite, certainly."

"No, to have half-an-hour's talk with you; more than I've had almost since I came home," and he sat down and played with the unmnended glove which was lying on the table. He would settle matters now, he thought, while he had the chance but he was not in the habit of making himself sentimentally agreeable, like Harold Greyson, and felt awkward. "Do you remember what long walks we used to have together at Welling, Chatty?" he began, after a few



(Drawn by M. ELLEN EDWARDS.)

“Up and away! it seems to say,
‘The world is full of joy and light’”—p. 680.

minutes' silence. "We have not had one since I came back."

"Why, you see, this place is quite different from Welling, and things have altered since then—so have I," and she laughed.

"Yes, I know you have," he said gravely.

"For the worse, of course?"

"Yes, I think you have."

"Complimentary," and she looked up, and cobbled a hole in her gloves in her astonishment. "How have I altered for the worse, pray? Let us begin: have I grown uglier?"

"No, prettier—ever so much."

"Then what is the wonderful alteration?"

"I know you are altered wonderfully to me. I thought of you all the time I was away. I only came back to see you," and he looked more awkward than ever.

"Pleasant for your other friends," and she laughed again, rather a nervous little laugh.

"Look here, Chatty," and he threw down the glove with a slight bang, "don't joke any longer," he said huskily, "because I can't bear it," and getting up, he crossed over, and looked straight in her face; "you ought to know that, and I am so fond of you, Chatty."

"You mustn't talk so to me, you must not indeed. It isn't right, and I don't like it," and she rose and went a little farther off.

"Don't be angry, Chatty. Don't you remember what friends we used to be at Welling? You forgot all about me while I was away."

"No, I didn't; I thought of you very often, bat—"

"Did you really? If you would only care for me. You don't know how I have thought of you."

"I do care for you, but—"

"But it isn't that. I want you to—to love me and—and marry me. There now, I have said it."

"But, George, you mustn't talk so. What shall I do? it's quite impossible."

"No, it can't be impossible, Chatty. Won't you try and think of it? How can it be impossible?" and he attempted to take her hands.

"No, you mustn't," she exclaimed, holding them back; "and it is quite impossible, quite—quite; I assure you it is."

"Why is it; why won't you try and like me? You don't care for that puppy Greyson," and he suddenly roused up. "Look here, Chatty, you don't care for that puppy Greyson, do you?" The awkward artilleryman was decidedly making things very much worse. "That's only flirting, isn't it? He does not care for you a bit. I watched him last night making love to that widow woman. You can't care for that coxcomb, and he's only trying to flirt with you. He doesn't love you as I do—as I have."

"But I didn't know you cared for me!" exclaimed Chatty, who had worked herself up into a regular passion, at hearing him so frankly express his opinion of Greyson.

"You must. I believe you never thought of me at all, Chatty," he said gloomily, but eagerly; "don't you remember, too, you promised you would wear that little locket in token of—"

"I don't remember anything about the promise or the locket either," she went on, indignantly. "I've thrown it away," which was a self-contradictory assertion, as well as a downright story; for with that peculiar perversity of which only that inexplicable creature, a woman, is capable, she had always kept it, and in spite of her attachment and engagement, it was safely tied round her neck at that very moment. "And how dare you say anything against Mr. Greyson? He does care for me, fifty times more than you do, and I care for him too. I love him dearly, and I'm going to be married to him, only no one knows it, and I'll never speak to you again—there!" and she got up, and, before he could stop her, went out of the room.

Half out of his senses, the artilleryman took up his hat and left the house.

"How silly I was to tell him about Harold," thought Chatty, as she heard the door bang. "However, he surely won't tell, for I told him no one knew it. I'll make Harold promise to ask papa this evening, and I'll never have another secret. It's very evident I can't, so it's no use trying."

On leaving her, George Baylis walked on at a rapid pace, scarcely knowing where he was going, and neither looking right nor left till, turning a corner, he suddenly found himself face to face with Mr. Deene.

"Holloa! Baylis! Why, where are you going and what's the matter?"

"How do you do, Mr. Deene? Nothing's the matter, only I am not very well."

"But something is the matter. Come back with me to my house. They are always pleased to see you."

"No, they are not," he said, a little excitedly. "I have just come from there, and I will never enter the door again. Good-bye, Mr. Deene; you have always been very kind to me."

"But what is it? what does it all mean?" insisted Parent the Terrible.

"Why, it's Chatty," he said doggedly; "she's refused me, that's all, and I'm such a fool."

"What did she refuse you for? Nothing would give me greater pleasure," and Mr. Deene evidently thought that that should have been a conclusive reason for his being accepted.

"Why, she says she's going to marry Greyson; and the words were no sooner out of his mouth than he remembered that she had said no one knew it, and he would have given the world to unsay them.

"Going to marry *Greyson*!" exclaimed Mr. Deene, in amazement. "I am sure she's not. What on earth do you mean? I know nothing at all about it, and would never consent to it. He's not a man to make any girl happy."

"I'm afraid I've made fearful mischief. I wish I hadn't said it. Pray don't think of it; but of course you will. What shall I do?" thought poor Baylis; "she'll think me so mean, and I fear I've got her into an awful row. I didn't know in the least what I was saying."

Then he turned and tried to do the best he could towards allaying the mischief he had done, but in vain; and Mr. Deene, boiling with rage, left him trembling for the storm he had raised.

Chatty had retired to her own room after her quarrel with George Baylis, and waited there quietly to recover herself, wondering what the next act in the drama would be.

"Chatty! Chatty! where are you? Come to me immediately," she suddenly heard her father call, in a voice he could hardly keep steady from rage.

"Oh!" she thought, as she descended in fear and trembling; "it's evidently all come out."

"Whatever can be the matter with dear old papa?" wondered the Irrepressible, who entered the house at that moment. "He's in a fearful rage, or else he's swallowed a thunderbolt and it's settled on his lungs."

"Pray what is the meaning of your being engaged to Mr. Harold Greyson, and my knowing nothing about it till I am informed of it by Baylis?"

"Nasty mean thing! I never thought he'd tell," she said, forgetting her fright in her indignation.

Then the storm burst. He would never consent to it. He liked Greyson very well as a visitor, but would never admit him in any other light. He was always in debt, and never lived within his income; he was thoughtless and frivolous, and had behaved very dishonourably in winning her affections and proposing to her without his knowledge, and he should write to him at once and forbid him the house, and he commanded her to break off the engagement immediately. This, to his amazement, she firmly refused to do. Then he told her again how wicked, and deceitful, and undutiful she had been, and how he would never forgive her if she married him, and that till she had come to her proper senses she was not even to consider herself his daughter: all of which made Chatty quake, but never once made her flinch.

Then Mrs. Deene appeared, and burst into tears, which nearly unnerved her, but spoilt the effect by declaring she should have been delighted if it had been George Baylis, which only made things worse.

And Maria and Emily came in, and though, of course, they would not go against their sister, they could not help exclaiming, "Oh, Chatty!" in a chorus of horrified astonishment; and Fred exclaimed, "What a jolly row!" and was packed out of the room for his pains; and the Irrepressible tried to say something, and was instantly shut up, upon which he contented himself with muttering expressively that "Chatty was a little stupid, but it was rather mean of Baylis to sneak;" and Chatty, in the first momentary lull, fled to her room, without the smallest chance of being asked to leave it till she chose to do so, and with not a very pleasant prospect when she did.

All the Deenes agreed in refusing to accept Harold Greyson on any other footing than that of an ordinary visitor. The fact was, though they all liked him, they all saw through him. Perhaps Mr. Deene was wrong in opposing it so strongly, for Chatty might certainly have done very much worse; but he had taken it into his head that she should not have him, and when he had taken anything into his head, it was very difficult to get it out again.

Presently, from her retreat, Chatty heard the Irrepressible passing her door, so she called to him to come in.

"Tom," she said, "are they as angry as ever?"

"Worse, ten times."

"Oh!" she exclaimed dolefully.

"What do you mean to do about Greyson?" he asked.

"Stick to him," she answered emphatically. Girls are candid with their brothers.

"I think you are very stupid, you know."

"Never mind that. Do help me, Tom, dear," she said, coaxingly. "I must see him and tell him about this."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" he inquired.

"Why, he knows where to be this evening. Can't you take me for a walk?"

They often went for a stroll together in the evening, so the proceeding was not likely to be remarked.

"And leave you for half an hour, I suppose. Well, what'll you do for me in return?"

"I'll lend you some money," she answered, a little sorrowfully.

The Irrepressible had a way of borrowing money from his sisters; he also had a way of not paying them back again.

"How much?"

Then, having negotiated a loan, he considered the transaction closed.

(To be continued.)

DAYS IN THE HOLY LAND.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE SEA OF GALILEE.

BY THE REV. F. W. FARRAR, M.A., F.R.S., MASTER OF MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE, AND HON. CHAPLAIN TO THE QUEEN.

Twas one of the brightest of the many glorious spring mornings which we had enjoyed in Palestine, when we started, on Easter Monday, April 18, from the Wells of Lübiyeh. Lübiyeh is a singularly quiet village on the summit of a hill, and is surrounded, as is so common in Palestine, with a ragged hedge of prickly pear. To the west of it rises another hill, from the top of which we had enjoyed a lovely view the evening before, and had seen the sun sink in a cloud of golden light behind those hills where of old abode the tribe of Naphtali, "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." The village of Lübiyeh was as silent and motionless as though it had been a village of the dead. From the time of our arrival we had scarcely seen any of the inhabitants, except a shepherd-lad who brought us a mountain-hare which he had just chased and knocked over with his club-headed stick. As usual, however, some stately but dejected-looking beings, wrapped up to the very eyes in their striped abbas, came out and seated themselves beside our tent, to watch us go through the operation of breakfast; and they lingered about us while we went to visit some large rocky caves and cisterns in the side of the hill. They were, however, remarkably quiet and civil, with that depressed and deprecatory manner which is inevitably produced in any race which has been subjected to long centuries of oppression.

The rich but neglected district across which we rode from Lübiyeh, is called *Ard el-Hamma*. It seems to abound in game. We had not ridden a quarter of a mile before Achmet came across two shepherd-boys, who had shot a brace or two of quails. We wanted him to buy them, but after a little chaffering he declared that they asked too much, and we had to be content with our hare.

The first stage of our ride took us over the shoulder of *Kurn Hattin*—or the Horns of Hattin—the traditional, and in great probability, the *real* Mountain of the Beatitudes. The Arabic name is descriptive of its summit, which bears a rude resemblance to the saddle of a camel, with its two projecting peaks or "horns;" and it reminded us of our own Cumberland mountain, "Saddleback," except that it is much less lofty. Its claim to be the hill on which our Lord uttered that first grand inauguration of his ministry, "the Sermon on the Mount," is by no means contemptible. "Seeing the multitude," says St. Matthew, "he went up into a mountain." Now this took place at the

western side of the Sea of Galilee, and the only distinct mountain on that side—which is at once sufficiently near and sufficiently suitable for the purpose—is this very Kurn Hattin. The ascent is easy, and the summit eminently adapted to accommodate an open-air congregation, since the Great Preacher could have sat on one of the grassy eminences, and his listeners, however numerous, could have been conveniently grouped around him on the broad plateau. It is also a conspicuous spot, and one whither the whole inhabitants of the populous "land of Gennesareth" could with ease have flocked on foot, or followed our Lord and his apostles. Safed, "the city set on a hill, which cannot be hid," is very distinctly visible from the summit, and would have given force to the moral of Matt. v. 14; and the whole region is rich with the flowers which would have given a picturesque vividness to that lovely allusion to "the lilies of the field" (Matt. vi. 28). At any rate, the mere probability is sufficient to give to the spot an imperishable interest, and it does not need the additional and obviously false association which it derives from being the supposed scene of the feeding of the five thousand. A stone is still pointed out near one of the "horns," which the Arabs called *Hagar en-Nusrâny*, or "Stone of the Nazarenes," for to this day the Christians are called *Nazarenes* by the Turkish and Arab population. The Latin Church calls this stone *Mensa Christi*, because here our Lord is supposed to have presided at the miraculous feast. Like so many other of the ecclesiastical legends of the Holy Land, the tradition shows an extreme ignorance of Scripture; for the narrative of Matt. xiv. shows with the utmost possible distinctness that the miracle of the loaves took place on the *eastern* side of the lake. The spot, however, acquires additional interest—if additional were needed—from its being the scene of that tragic and memorable battle in which Saladin defeated Guy de Lusignan, the weak-minded King of Jerusalem. In this battle, so pictorial in its surroundings, and so miserable in its termination, the great Sultan utterly crushed the power of the Crusaders, and put an end to the inglorious dynasty of Christian kings of Jerusalem, which had been so gloriously founded. The Christian knights, when settled in Palestine, rapidly degenerated both in moral and physical force. One of the kings of Jerusalem had been an actual leper, and Guy de Lusignan, the last of the race, might not have been conquered so easily had he not differed so unspeak-

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ably in character from that noble soldier who humbly refused to wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn the crown of thorns.*

A steep ride down the hill brings us to the town of Hattin, looking very lovely and peaceful, with its beautiful gardens, its precipitous ramparts of surrounding rock, and the pleatiful fountains of water that gush from them perennially. At its foot lies the fertile plain of Hattin, running along the summits of the cliffs that guard the western side of the Lake of Galilee. A large eagle was slowly sailing over our heads in the cloudless azure, at which my young friend L— took a shot with his revolver, not wounding it, but just touching the feathers of its tail in a manner that made it rapidly soar to a height where it would be safe from the attentions of the youthful sportsman.

A little way past Hattin, the level plateau of the cliffs is broken at the edge by the narrow opening of a gorge called the *Wady el-Hamâm*, or "Valley of Doves." Close to the edge of this ravine lie the ruins of Irbid, the Beth-Arbel of Hosea. The *Wady el-Hamâm* is a splendid tropical gorge, which as far as mere scenery is concerned, was probably the loveliest and most memorable part of our Syrian ride. It is, in fact, a vast rent in the cliffs, winding down from the plain of Hattin to "the shining levels of the Lake" of Galilee. At the moment of our entering it, there seemed to be some unknown disturbance in the feathered kingdom, for numbers of small birds were twittering and fluttering about us in the long grass, a score of eagles were on the wing, and vast flocks of pelicans were circling about at a great height over our heads. A cool, tinkling stream runs through the gorge, and its sides are luxuriant with tropical and semi-tropical vegetation, and aromatic with a profusion of flowers. It goes far to justify the celebrated description by Josephus of the Sea of Galilee and its environs, as forming "a miracle of Nature." Its extreme seclusion, too, gives it an additional charm. I believe that even European travellers but seldom ride through it, and we did not meet a single human being from one end of it to the other. In consequence of this the birds were less scared by the presence of man than I have ever seen them in any other place.

"Nor, save for pity, was it hard to take

The helpless life, so wild that it was tame."

The doves, from which the valley derives its name, live in the numberless clefts of the upper part of the ravine; and the beautiful bold eagles, settling quite near to us, constantly reminded me of Shelley's lines—

"As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit, one moment may sit
In the light of his golden wings.

As for the lovely coracius, or roller-bird—a bird in

* Godfrey de Bouillon.

size and shape not unlike a jay, but all of a singularly glossy and brilliant blue—it seems to be tame everywhere, but in this wady it sat so quietly on the bushes that even a pistol-shot could hardly startle it away. It was here that we first noticed the nûbk, or lote-tree, the traditional tree of our Saviour's crown of thorns. The extreme heat of the valley made the nûbk fruit nearly ripe, and Achmet not only praised it very loudly, but seemed so fond of it that he stopped repeatedly to pluck it. In size and shape it is very like a small and bright-coloured crab-apple, and it has a stone in the middle. The shrub itself—the *Zizyphus loti*—could, however, hardly have furnished the crown of thorns, for we saw none of it anywhere near Jerusalem. Otherwise the small round green leaves would well have suited the mocking purpose of mimicking a victor's wreath, and the thorns, as we found to our cost, are the strongest, the most troublesome, and the most tenacious possible. And if it were the object to inflict the maximum of pain, few thorny shrubs would be more suitable than this for so cruel a purpose. If the traveller is not careful, he may hurt himself seriously. I put my hand with some caution into the branches to pluck some ripe berries that looked particularly tempting, and a strong pair of dogskin gloves were almost torn to pieces before I could extricate myself. It was quite dangerous to ride along the narrow goat-path with the straggling branches of these shrubs spreading out on both sides of it, for if a thorn brushed against one's face, or the horse's side, it inflicted a deep wound, and if it caught any part of the clothes, they were rent in the most hopeless manner, unless one stopped to disentangle the thorns with the utmost care.

Looking up the steep sides of the gorge, we saw the deep caves and grottoes, natural and artificial, which have had such an important history, and which for years made this region the terror of the surrounding neighbourhood; for these caves were large enough to hold 600 men; they were rendered almost impregnable by their position midway in a cliff nearly a thousand feet in height; and they were supplied with cisterns and channels in which to preserve the rain-water, so that when once provisioned, they were capable of a long defence. They are alluded to in the First Book of Maccabees (1 Macc. ix. 2), as having furnished a refuge to the inhabitants of Arbela, when attacked by the forces of the King of Syria, and the cliffs in which they are situated probably witnessed the savage act of vengeance described in Hosea x. 14. The people seem naturally to have fled there for shelter, as the people of Delphi fled to the great Corycian cave, when Greece was invaded by Persians and Gauls. Shortly after the time of our Lord, Josephus fortified them in his gallant defence of his native country, and shortly before our

Lord's time, Herod the Great had emptied them of bandits, by letting his soldiers down to the mouth of them, in large chests supported by iron chains, and so, with fire and smoke, and long hooks, driving and dragging them out of their lair, and hurling them down the same cliffs which, 500 years before, had witnessed the death of the mothers and children of Beth-arbel, to which the Prophet Hosea alludes.

Emerging from this gorgeous and interesting ravine, with its wild and troubled memories, we found ourselves close to the peaceful glittering lake. It lies at the bottom of a great dent, or basin, in the earth's surface, more than 500 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Hence the burning and enervating heat of the valley; but hence, too, the variety of its foliage, the fertility of its soil, the luxuriance of its flora, the harvests that ripen a month earlier than they do elsewhere, and the abundance of refreshing rivulets which tumble down the hill-sides into the fresh glittering beautiful sheet of water. The very name Gennesareth means "garden of abundance;" and the harp-like contour of the lake gave rise to its more ancient name of Chinnereth, or "the harp." Josephus, in a passage of glowing admiration, describes the region with its palms and vines, and oranges, and figs, and almonds, and pomegranates, and warm springs, as a perfect paradise; and, in spite of its present desolation, to the contemplative mind it is so still. True that in the time of the Jewish historian it was a most remarkable centre of commercial activity; caravans from various quarters visited it; its plain was busy with the hum of populous towns and villages; its waves were ploughed with 4,000 vessels, and reflected the golden house and stately buildings with which Herod Antipas had adorned his new city of Tiberias. One road led from it down the Jordan Valley on the west; another crossed a bridge at the south of the lake and led through Perea to the fords of the Jordan near Jericho; a third led by Sepphoris to Aecho and the Mediterranean Sea; a fourth, which we had just traversed, passed over the mountains of Zabulon by Nazareth, and across the plain of Esdraelon towards the south. The district was pre-eminently central; Iturea, Syria, Phoenicia, were immediately accessible by crossing the lake, the river, or the hills. Jews and Gentiles were strangely mingled there, and the wild Arabs of the desert might there be seen side by side with enterprising Phoenicians, contemptuous Romans, and cunning Greeks. Its shores are now desolate. With the exception of the small town of Tiberias, and the frightful village of Mejdel, there is scarcely a single inhabited spot upon its banks. One miserable boat—and even that not always—has replaced its gay and numerous fleet. A poor boat may

sometimes be obtained at Tiberias; but not even one was visible when we saw the lake. Nothing can illustrate more thoroughly than this the dejected inanity of the inhabitants, and the utter apathy which makes them indifferent both to pleasure and profit. But the natural features still remain; the lake still lies in the bosom of the hills, reflecting every varying gleam of the atmosphere, like an opal set in emeralds; the cup-like basin still overflows with the sunbeams; the air is still balmy with natural perfumes; and there are palms, and green fields, and streams, and grey heaps of ruin. And what it has lost in population and activity, it has gained in solemnity and interest. Its centrality was, perhaps, the reason why the Saviour chose it as the scene of his ministry; but even if every vestige of human habitation disappears from beside it, and the jackal and the hyæna howl about the crumbling relics of the synagogues where once He taught, the fact that He did so choose it will give a sense of sacredness and pathos to its lonely waters till time shall be no more.

What the traveller will see when he catches his first eager glimpse of the limpid sheet of water, will be a small oval-shaped lake, thirteen miles long and six broad. It is evidently of volcanic origin, and the earthquakes which have rent the walls of Tiberias, as well as the hot springs at several places in the vicinity of the lake, show that volcanic agencies are still at work. All along the eastern side runs a green plain, which, except at one spot (the probable scene of the destruction of the swine after the healing of the Gadarene demoniac), is everywhere about a quarter to half a mile in width. Beyond this rises, to the height of about two thousand feet, an escarpment of desolate-looking hills, scored by various ravines, and having a plateau at the top. As there are neither trees nor villages to be seen on that side, and no signs of cultivation, the view in that direction has a certain monotony, but this is atoned for by the air of mystery derived from its very desolation, and from the fact that even in our Lord's time it was so unfrequented that he had but to visit it when he required the refreshment of solitude. It is of this lonely shore that we are reminded in the lines of the beautiful hymn—

"Come to a desert-place apart,
And rest a little while,
So spake the Lord when mind and heart
Were faint and sick through toil."

It was somewhere among these featureless hills—probably towards the north-eastern corner of the lake—that he fed the 5,000 who had flocked after him on foot; it was somewhere about those grey ravines that he spent the night in prayer. And how many times must his eye have rested with pleasure on the dimpling surface of the inland sea—a sight delightful in any region of the world, but doubly refreshful and delicious in this sultry land!

THE RETURN FROM MARKET.

A SONNET.

AS when a careful mother who, all day,
By stony road, or in some shallow frail,
Betakes her to the chattering scenes of
sale,

There to provide, with what best thought she may,
Stores for the household need that shall not fail;
Yet, home returning, meets the selfish wail

Of babes who find no new toy for their play:
We, puling babes, half-sighted like as they,
Cry out upon that loveful Providence
Which for our own best good moves all above,
But will not alway make us to be gay,
Yet ever, though not ever to our sense,
Yearns o'er us with the Mother-Wings of Love.

THE DESERT ISLAND.

A PARABLE. AFTER THE GERMAN.

ABENEVOLENT and rich man wished to make one of his slaves happy: he gave him his freedom and a ship furnished with many costly things.

"Go," said he, "with these things to a foreign land, trade with the goods, and all the profits shall be thine."

The slave set out; but he had been but a short time at sea when a violent storm arose, which caused his ship to strike against a rock and founder. The costly goods sank in the sea with all his companions, and he himself reached with difficulty the shore of an island.

Hungry, cold, and without help, he went farther inland, and wept over his misfortunes, when he saw in the distance a large city, from whence a number of the inhabitants, with great acclamations, came towards him. "Hail, our king!" cried they, and putting him in a splendid carriage, took him to the city. He came to a regal palace, where they put on him a purple robe, a diadem upon his forehead, and mounted him on a golden throne. The people of rank fell down before him, and saluted him as their sovereign.

At first the new king thought all this splendour must be a beautiful dream, until the continuance of his good fortune prevented him from doubting the reality of this wonderful event. "I cannot comprehend," he said to himself, "what has bewitched the eyes of this people, to make a naked stranger their king. They know not who I am, they ask not whence I come, but set me upon their throne. What an extraordinary custom they have in this island!"

Thus he thought, and became so curious to know the reason of his elevation, that he resolved to ask one of the nobles of his court, who appeared to be a sensible man, for a solution of the riddle.

"Vizier," asked he of him, "why have they made me your king? How could they know that I had come to the island? And what will become of me?"

"Sire," answered the vizier, "this island is in-

habited by spirits. They have for a long time prayed the Almighty to send them yearly a son of Adam, to reign over them. The Almighty has received their prayer, and every year, upon a certain day, causes a man to land upon this island. The inhabitants hasten to him, receive him joyously, as you have seen, and acknowledge him as their sovereign; but his reign does not continue more than a year. When this time has elapsed, and the appointed day comes round, he is deprived of his dignity, they take from him his regal ornaments, and clothe him in mean garments. His servants take him forcibly to the shore, and put him in a ship built especially for the purpose, which takes him to another island. This island is desert and waste; he who but a few days before was a mighty monarch, arrives naked, and finds neither subjects nor friends. This, sire, is the settled law of this kingdom, which no king during his reign can abolish."

"Were my predecessors," asked the king, "informed of the short duration of their sovereignty?"

"None of them," answered the vizier, "were ignorant of this law; but some of them allowed themselves to be dazzled by the splendour which surrounded the throne. They forgot the sad future, and spent their year unwisely. Others became intoxicated with the sweetness of their fortune; they would not trust themselves to think of the desert island, lest it should spoil the agreeableness of their present enjoyment, and so went from one pleasure to another, until their time came, and they were thrown into the ship. When the unfortunate day arrived, they lamented and sighed over their delusion; but now it was too late. They were surrendered without mercy to their misery, which they expected, and which they had not averted by acting wisely."

This explanation of the vizier's filled the king with fear; he shuddered at the former kings' fates, and wished to escape their destiny. He saw that he must hasten to make better use of the remaining days of his reign.

"Wise vizier," he said to the spirit, "you have disclosed to me my future fate, and the short duration of my regal power; but I pray you also tell me what I must do, if I would avoid the misery of my predecessors."

"Remember, sire," answered the spirit, "that you came to this island naked: even so you must depart and never return. There is but one only way to obviate the want that threatens the exile in that land—namely, to make it fruitful and to give it inhabitants. This is permitted by our law, and your subjects will be perfectly obedient and go where you direct them. Send also a great number of mechanics and labourers there, and let them turn the waste fields into fruitful acres, build towns and storehouses, and see that they are provided with all necessities. In a word, prepare a new kingdom, whose inhabitants will receive you with joy after your exile."

The king was a sensible man, and the spirit's conversation gave his resolution and activity wings. He sent immediately a large number of inhabitants thither; they went joyfully, and set about the work with zeal. The island was soon improved, and ere six months had passed, beautiful cities stood upon blooming meadows. Notwithstanding, the king did not allow his ardour to abate; he sent over more inhabitants—these were still readier to go than the former ones, to a land where their friends and relations dwelt.

In the meantime the end of the year came ever nearer. The former kings had dreaded this moment, as they would then have to leave all their splendour; but this king saw it approach with longing, that he might depart to a country where, through his activity, he had built a lasting dwelling. The appointed day arrived at last. The king was seized in the palace, his diadem and his kingly garments taken from him, the inevitable ship brought that should carry him to his place of exile. He had hardly arrived at the shore of the new island, when the inhabitants hastened to meet him joyfully, and received him with great honour, and on his head, instead of a diadem, the splendour of which would only last a year, they placed an unfading crown of flowers. The Almighty rewarded his wisdom; he gave his subjects immortality, and made him their everlasting king.

The benevolent rich man is God; the slave, who his master sends, is man at his birth; the island where he lands is the world; the inhabitants, who welcome him joyfully, are the parents; the vizier, who informs him of his impending fate, and advises him is Wisdom; the year of his reign is the course of his mortal life, and the waste island, where he must go, is the future world; the workmen he sends there are the good deeds which he performs during his life; the kings which preceded him, and who thought not of the unhappiness which threatened them, are the greatest part of mankind, who are only occupied

with earthly pleasures, without thinking of the life after death. They will be punished with want and misery, when they appear before the throne of the Almighty, their hands void of good works.

FLOWERS FOR THE SICK CHILDREN.

WE have been requested to acknowledge, on behalf of the nurses and patients of the Hospital for Sick Children, the receipt of a hamper of wild flowers, contributed by several kind friends, old and young, in the Isle of Wight. This present was a source of great delight, and we make this small mention of so graceful a deed in the hope that other of our readers will be induced to "do likewise."—ED.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

222. A remarkable prophecy descriptive of the spread of Christianity in the world is found in almost identical words in Isaiah and Habakkuk. Quote it.

223. Where do we find mention made of the first altar erected under the monarchy?

224. On what occasion in the New Testament is David referred to as a "man after God's own heart?"

225. A law respecting the passover mentioned twice only in the Pentateuch, is recorded by St. John as having been fulfilled in Jesus. What is it?

226. What was the only condition made by the apostles in consenting that Paul and Barnabas should preach to the Gentiles?

227. Three of Elisha's miracles resemble some performed by Christ. Mention them.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 656.

207. In Acts vi. 7 we are told that "a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith." They, of course, would tell the phenomenon of the rending of the veil.

208. God's answer to Abraham's prayer on behalf of Ishmael (Gen. xvii. 18, 21.)

209. Dust (Gen. xiii. 16); the stars (Gen. xv. 5); sand (Gen. xxii. 17).

210. Jer. xxxiii. 22, where God promises to the Captivity a stability of a blessed seed.

211. Judges viii. 1, 3. When Gideon pacifies the Ephraimites we read: "Their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that."

212. Gen. xiv. 14. "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, and pursued them unto Dan."

213. Mamre and Debir. Mamre is called, in Gen. xxiii. 19, *Hebron*, and in Josh. xiv. 15, *Kirjath-arba*. Debir is called, in Josh. xv. 15, *Kirjath-sopher*, and in Josh. xv. 49, *Kirjath-sannah*.

T R I E D.

BY F. M. F. SKENE, AUTHOR OF "A STORY OF VIONVILLE."



"She knew that she should see his face no more"—p. 692.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

WINTER in England — cold, bleak, mournful winter; snow on the ground; an icy chill in the blast; dark clouds overhead shortening the short days by blotting out the sun before he had even

finished his brief course; nothing cheering in all the aspect of that Northern land, save only the Christmas glow that was brightening swiftly on the horizon of the future. Yes, winter in England; but

on the fair shores of classic Greece there was a yet-enduring summer, tempered from the burning heat of its most brilliant months, but warm and bright with skies of limpid blue, and softest tints of purple and of rose, defining the delicate outline of the distant hills, and clothing the Attic plains with ideal beauty.

Athens was lying bathed in the glory of the sunset, and the ruins of the Parthenon, which so nobly crowns the ancient city, shone as with living light. On one side, stretching down to the sea, were the silvery olive groves of the Academies, where, long before the Light of the World had come to bring life and immortality to men, Plato walked with his followers, and caught faint gleams from the eternal truths that were one day to be so fully revealed: on the other side, the mighty columns of the Temple of Jupiter, standing in lonely grandeur on a solitary spot, shot up into the blue air in their dazzling whiteness, even as they had stood for ages upon ages, while nations rose and fell upon the face of the earth like waves on the sea of time.

At the foot of one of these magnificent pillars May Bathurst was seated, rigid and motionless, as on that day when we saw her first, watching by the roadside near Combe Bathurst for the passing of Sydney Leigh, the idol of her heart, who was coming home, as she believed, to be the joy and crown of her mortal life; rigid and motionless as then, but changed, how changed! gone was the bright ardent expression, the look of energy and power, the smile from her lips, the light of hope from her eyes; dull and sunken now, they looked out on that fair landscape as if they saw it not, and her pale lips were closed in the set curve of habitual sadness. Her hat had fallen off, and lay unheeded on the ground, and the heavy masses of her dark hair hung loose and neglected round her white face; her hands were folded idle and listless on her knees; irresistibly her appearance recalled the expression she had herself made use of when she said that she was waiting till death should come.

There was not a sound, save far off the tinkling sheep-bells on the plain, as the Eastern shepherd, going before his flock, led them to still waters and green pastures by the call of his familiar voice, according to the unchanged custom of the days when the sheep, thus led, afforded a lovely illustration to the Almighty Shepherd of his own tender love and care.

But suddenly, amid the soft silence, there came a voice to May Bathurst's ears which spoke to her, and said, "Servant of Christ, what do you here?"

Then a thrill might have been seen almost visibly to pass through her frame, as when a sudden gust of wind sweeps over a tree whose branches droop in the noonday heat, and causes every leaf to quiver with silent trembling.

She lifted up her tear-dimmed, mournful eyes, and

met the full force of the preacher's piercing gaze, fixed on her with a power in his expression which made her feel as if his whole soul spoke to her in it. May Bathurst knew that this man had been to her the messenger of God—an angel of light to her spirit, yet as her sullen conscience stirred under his eloquent look, the words that rose in her heart and almost spoke from her lips were those uttered by the unrighteous king to the prophet of old: "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" She did not utter them, however. Her eyes drooped beneath his gaze, and she remained silent. Then he repeated his question: "What are you doing here, Miss Bathurst?"

She felt inclined to resent his assuming a right to inquire into her life. She evaded a reply, but with a faint attempt to smile, said, "I might rather ask you how you come to be here, Mr. Evans; I thought you were at Combe Bathurst."

"I was there, till the voice of a true friend told me that the daughter of the man, whose dying head was pillow'd on my breast in his last hour of agony, was even now in deadly peril, from which it might be I could save her; then I rose up and came here."

The allusion to her father touched May to the heart, as the skilled teacher knew it would.

"You took this long journey only to see me! is it possible, Mr. Evans?"

"I took it gladly, so moved by the thought of your condition that I have not rested night nor day, but only hastened to your side if haply I might find you before it was too late."

"Too late! too late for what?"

"For the day of grace to linger—for the door to remain open! Have you forgotten the cry of those who had slumbered and slept while the Bridegroom tarried?—'Open unto us!'—but the door was shut."

May Bathurst trembled from head to foot.

"Sir, what do you mean?" she said.

"I will tell you," he answered, and his voice took the tone of strange softness which it could sometimes assume, as he sat down on a stone near May, and began to speak to her very slowly and distinctly. "You will hear me patiently, will you not?" he said.

"Yes, surely; I should but have sat here till the sun set," she answered, as if anxious he should understand it could make little difference to her whether she heard him or not.

"Listen, then, and I will tell you the history of a soul whom the Lord loved. He had loved it from the everlasting ages, for with him time is not, and all things are ever present with him. He had loved it in the midst of heaven's own glory, and he loved it through mortal agony and death, endured, to bring it close into his very heart for ever, and for a time it dwelt in the world not knowing him or his love; then he called it softly, tenderly, as a mother calls her child, wandering in darkness far away, and it

recognised his voice, and turning, flew to him, and was received into his embrace, never more to be plucked out of his hand, except of its own will it fell away from his encircling arms. Then in that morning of grace was there wondrous peace and joy for the ransomed soul; the dews of heaven fell on it, and the fair blossoms of all holy virtues, gave promise that it should bear much fruit, ere it came to the gathering in of the eternal harvest. But the servant is not above his Master, and all souls that are to be His for ever, must be tried, as He was tried, yet knew no sin. So a test was sent to this soul, whom He had won to Himself by anguish, and it came in the shape of human love fatally linked to one who was the Lord's cruel enemy."

At these words May Bathurst began to tremble, and she cast an appealing glance at the preacher, as if to implore of him to cease; but he did not seem to see her, he was looking out over the distant sea to the soft sky that rose above it in its limpid purity, and he continued speaking, as though to an unseen audience, there: "What should that soul beloved of Christ have done in this its bitter trial? Ah! turned swift from the alluring vision, and the sweet beseeching words, and flown back to the Lord of its life, there to clasp his pierced feet, and cry to him to shield it from the fierce temptation—to save it from the unholy thing that owned him not—to keep it safe in the everlasting arms, his own for ever! Did it do this? Alas! no. From the Divine face, when the love of eternity shone on it, it turned away, tore itself out of the clinging, merciful hands that once were nailed for it unto the cross, and flung itself into the embrace of the godless man who trampled under foot the blood of the covenant, and said, in resolute defiance, and outspoken words, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the world, and the flesh, and the devil.' Then from all those who in heaven rejoice over the repentant sinner, and watch for the heirs of salvation with eager sympathy, there went up a wailing cry, 'Tried and found wanting! Alas! alas! tried and found wanting!'"

"Mr. Evans, have pity, I do not think I can bear this," gasped May; but still he did not heed her, and went on:

"Yet the Lord loved that soul, faithless and failing as it was, and he would not leave it to perish if it would but consent to be saved; so with a great blow he smote away the godless idol that stood between it and himself, and left it free once more to come to him for pity and for pardon, for life renewed, and the sure prospect of eternal joy; but the soul would have none of his pardon or his love, it said, 'I have lost my idol, and he was all to me for ever and for ever; I will have no God, no Saviour, no hope, no heaven; I will live, not living, till death comes, and death shall be to me only the burial in the dust, for I will never look beyond it.' The Lord would not compel the soul to come to him if it chose to remain

grovelling in the ashes of its faithlessness, so it all came to pass in the future as it had willed itself; it lived its life, not living, till death came, and then it went down into the dust, without hope or wish; but over the closing coffin-lid there went again the wailing cry, 'Tried and found wanting!' The grave was closed, and none knew where the faithless soul was secreted, but the centuries went on, flowing down into the ocean of eternity, and many another soul was tried, and triumphed in the trial, but for this one which had been found wanting, there could never be another day of grace; its time of probation, its little span, was over, and the record of its apostasy was stamped on it immutably. Then the death day of the old world came, and it was laid upon the funeral pyre, and the voice of the Son of man was heard thrilling through its countless graves, and the dead came forth in obedience to his call, and ranged themselves before the great white throne, to hear the sentence of their everlasting doom, and many there were whom the voice of victorious love summoned to enter into the joy of their Lord; but over the poor faithless soul only the one sad wail could rise again, 'Tried and found wanting.' And at the sound it turned and fled from the face of Him that sat upon the throne, and was seen of the blessed ones no more: for they had been faithful in their generation, but it had been 'tried and found wanting'."

The preacher's voice died away on the last word with infinite sadness, and as his thrilling tones ceased to vibrate through the air, the low, muffled sobbing of her whose conscience he had stricken as with fire from heaven, came sounding full of mortal pain upon his ear, and in a moment more she had slipped from her seat and sunk on the ground at his feet, with her head laid even with the dust, while from her throbbing, bursting heart went out the cry, "Oh, lost, lost! faithless! wicked! What shall I do to be saved, even yet? what shall I do?"

"Repent—return!" the preacher answered, in a voice that went pealing like a trumpet-call through the echoing columns; "come back to Christ, his arms are open still, his pardoning love is not soon wearied; the day of grace yet lingers; the death for which you waited stands aloof; the grave has not closed above your head; the hour of judgment has not sounded; the fiats of eternal doom have not been spoken: there is yet time. Awake! arise! Live, ransomed soul! now and for ever live to God!" and with streaming eyes uplifted, with yearning hands stretched out, with her whole ardent, agonising spirit concentrated in the voiceless prayer that quivered on her lips, dumb from excess of feeling, he saw that she delivered herself up once more unto her God, in repentance, in self-devotion, in undivided love, with a fulness of surrender which would bear her henceforward triumphant through every test and trial.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE preacher's mission was accomplished: he had restored May Bathurst to her true self. When she looked back upon the last few months it seemed to her as if she had been existing in a dreadful dream-like trance, in which her higher nature had been actually dead. Now, clear and distinct as if it had been actually mapped out visibly before her eyes, she could see the course along which she had been led by the wondrous mercy that would not let her go through all her own unfaithfulness and error, and which, failing to lure her by the sweetness of love, drove her, by sharpest pangs of suffering, to the one sure refuge, where all her real bliss was stored. Well, indeed, could she see and understand her whole probation now; and the first proof that May Bathurst was restored to her right mind and the true life of her soul, was in the passionate thanksgiving, deep and heartfelt, which she offered to her Master for her release from the ties that bound her to Sydney Leigh, his enemy, and had set her heart at liberty to run the way of his commandments. Not that she had ceased to love the man who had won her heart, or ever could do so; that was simply an impossibility for one of her deep, earnest nature. Once for all she had yielded up to him her whole power of earthly affection, and it could never be transferred to any other now; but henceforward her love for him who was the husband of Irene Leigh could only exist in the shape of ceaseless prayers for his eternal welfare, and willing services to him and to his wife, whenever she could in any way promote his happiness. And for herself, though for his sake she would lead a solitary life, uncheered by the joys of wife or mother, she could and did bless the strong, sharp blow, that had struck off the chains of her unrighteous bondage even as the thongs fell from the apostle's hands and feet, when the angel smote him on the side and bade him leave his prison darkness for the light of day. Restored to the one love that would never change or fail, May's whole spirit seemed bathed in new energy and power, and she who had been waiting in her sullen apathy till death should come, now prayed and panted to live, that she might do some little work for her loving Lord, ere the glad hour came for her to pass to his more immediate presence.

May took counsel with the preacher as to the occupations of her future life, before he left Athens to return to his unwearied labour, and she heard much from him as to the condition of her own tenantry, which showed her that there was ample scope for all her zeal amongst the people whom

God had given into her care, and whom she had too long neglected and overlooked. She could see now how half-hearted, and therefore how hollow and useless, had been all her former attempts to work for Christ; they had never been the offspring of a soul devoted to him, but only the feeble efforts of an uneasy conscience to mask even from itself its defection from its true allegiance; henceforth she resolved it should be very different.

May's plans were formed at once; she would return to Combe Bathurst without delay, and there throw herself heartily into the wants, spiritual and temporal, of the many poor and ignorant who dwelt upon her lands. She felt that they would need her help now more than they had ever done since the estate became her own; for the preacher found that the sudden call upon him to leave Combe Bathurst for her sake, had been but the precursor of his final departure from it. While he was still in Athens an appeal was made to him to undertake the care of a newly-founded mission to India, of such great importance and promise that he could not think it right to turn aside from it, and the very fact that he was conscious how his heart clung to his own land, and to the people among whom he had laboured so long, made him the more rigidly compel himself at once to accept the arduous work now offered to him beneath the burning Indian sun. The case was urgent, and admitted of no delay; if he went, he must go at once, and he did not hesitate. He would not turn his face back with even a parting look to his native country, but started at once from the shores of Greece for the far Eastern home, whence he was to return no more.

Many messages of love and counsel he begged May to convey to the poor people of the quarry lands, for Evans knew well that although the revenues of that part of the estate now passed to Sydney Leigh in right of his wife, the moral welfare of the people, to whom Leigh never gave a thought, would still depend on May Bathurst's care alone.

She listened to the last counsels of the preacher with the deepest interest and reverence, for she knew that she should see his face and hear his voice no more. It was a life-long work to which he was going, and he never meant to return to England. So she went with him to the shore, when he embarked for Alexandria, bent her head to receive his last blessing, and thanked him with glistening eyes for the hope and very life she owed to him, and then Philip Evans passed from her sight for ever, though she was to bear the traces of his influence upon her soul beyond the grave itself.

(To be continued.)

GREAT REVERSES A TEST OF CHARACTER.

BY THE REV. S. COX.

JAMES i. 9, 10.

LET the brother who is of low degree rejoice in that he is lifted up: but the rich, in that he is brought low." For all so simple as it sounds, this passage has much exercised and perplexed the students of the Word. And, indeed, most of us a little shrink from taking it in its plain natural sense. Taken simply as it stands, it seems to teach, first, that the poor man is to be very glad when he is made rich—not a very difficult duty, perhaps; and, then, that the rich man is to be no less glad when his riches use their wings and fly away—a duty so difficult that most men hold it to be impossible. Even the Commentators hesitate to demand so lofty a strain of virtue in the name of Christ; which surely is very disinterested of the Commentators. For as they are for the most part poor and toilworn men, one should have thought that *they* at least would have found this passage very simple and pleasant, and have been quite willing to see rich men grow poor that poor men might grow rich.

Nor do they stand alone. Hardly any man ventures to take St. James as really meaning what he seems to mean—viz., that the poor good man is to rejoice when wealth comes to him, and that the rich good man is to rejoice when his wealth leaves him. Most of us take him to mean that the exaltation in which the poor brother is to rejoice is a *spiritual* exaltation: that he is to be glad because, though he may be low in the world's esteem, he stands high among the saints, and is rich toward God; and that, in like manner, the abasement in which the rich brother is to rejoice is a spiritual abasement—he is to be glad that, despite his opulence, he is of a lowly and contrite heart. All which *may* be very true, but surely is not the truth taught here. For observe what we must do in order to get this meaning from St. James's words. We must take one half of each of his phrases in its natural, and the other half in a non-natural, sense; one half literally, and the other half spiritually. When he says "brother of low degree," we must take him to mean a poor man of no social mark, not a brother very deficient in the graces of the Spirit; but when he speaks of the poor brother as being "lifted up," we are not to understand him as meaning that the poor man is lifted out of his poverty; we are to put a spiritual sense into the words, and read them to mean that he is raised to an immaterial wealth. When he says "rich brother," we are to take him as describing a man opulent in this world's goods; but so soon as he speaks of the rich man's "abasement," we are to

understand, not that the rich man is brought down to penury, but that his heart is humbled, his spirit brought down.

Now, if we read the inspired words in this double sense, if we take one part of a sentence in one way and the other part in another way, we make the Bible mean anything—that is, nothing. We shall never be sure that we have the mind of the Spirit; we shall make every Scripture "of a private interpretation;" we shall each of us carry about his own Biblical key, and construe every passage to our own mind. We can only read the Inspired Volume to profit as we seek, first, the plain obvious meaning of its words, and are guided by that, however sharply it may cut our prejudices against the grain. Read fairly and simply, I am bold to say that the words of St. James cannot fail to carry this single sense to our minds—that the Christian brother who is poor in this world's goods is to be glad when he gets rich in this world's goods; and that the Christian brother who is rich in lands or money is to be glad when God takes them away from him.

St. James is the plainest, the least subtle and mystical, of the New Testament writers. He uses words in their simplest sense, and forms them into pithy downright sentences. He says what he means, and means what he says, beyond almost any other author. He is the Cobbett or the Defoe of the New Testament company. You need never misunderstand him; it is almost impossible to misunderstand him, except by thrusting meanings into his words which never entered his mind: and therefore, even if these verses stood alone, we might be quite sure that he meant the poor brother to be glad when he got rich, and the rich brother to be glad when he became poor.

But the verses do not stand alone; they are connected both with the verses which go before them and the verses which come after them. He strikes his keynote directly he has uttered his brief cordial greeting. In his greeting he has wished the Christians of the Hebrew Dispersion joy—"Joy to you" (chap. i. verse 1). But what a wish was that for men so miserable and oppressed, persecuted in every city, everywhere spoken against! How could they hope for joy? St. James teaches them (verse 2): "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials," and then surely you, whose whole life is a trial, will never be at a loss for joy. True; but how were they to find joy in pain and shame and loss? This also St. James teaches them (verses 3, 4). Trial begets that patient and constant temper of the faithful soul which makes a man sound and perfect in character,

lacking nothing. Trial is a furnace in which character is tested, purified, matured. And if, as they were bound to do, they made Christian perfection of character their first object, preferring it far before happy external conditions, they would rejoice in any condition, or in any change of condition, which put character to the test and helped to make it perfect. Constancy in trial makes a man perfect, as in other ways, so also in this, that it fosters a single mind in him; it compels him to subordinate his lower cravings to the higher aspirations of the soul; it frees him from the distraction of divided and contending desires, from the double-mindedness—one mind tending to earth, the other to heaven—which cripples his energies and mars his service (verses 5—8). Once possessed of the firm patient temper which is bred by trial well endured, he is no longer “a man of two minds, unstable in all his ways.” But if trials have this happy effect on his character, may he not count it all joy when he falls into them? May he not well rejoice even in the largest reverses of fortune? If he be a poor man, and suddenly grow rich, here is a heavy trial which cannot fail to affect his character. If, when this test is applied, he retain a constant loyalty to Christ, will not this reverse of fortune have helped to make him perfect? If, on the other hand, he be a rich man, and is suddenly brought down to poverty, here is a test, a searching and decisive test, of character. Let him be patient now, amid his broken schemes and defeated hopes; let him sincerely rejoice in any change of condition which tests and fortifies his character; and is he not obviously becoming sound and perfect, approaching even that final perfection in which he will “lack nothing?” Holding perfection of spiritual character to be the highest good of man, St. James could honestly bid men rejoice in whatever changes and reverses tested, developed, matured the energies and graces of that character in them; he could honestly pronounce those the most “blessed” among men who endured temptation and rose through many trials to the crown of life.

So that this passage falls in with the whole scope of St. James’s argument. With that argument in view, it becomes impossible to read this passage in any other than its plain literal sense. The poor man is to be glad when he is tried by riches, the rich man is to be glad when he is tried by poverty, since God so ordains and controls the trials of men as that all changes and reverses conduce to make them perfect and complete.

The ruling thought of these verses is, then, that great reverses of fortune are a test of Christian character, and that we ought to rejoice in them because they so test our character as to mature and perfect it. And I suppose no man will deny that great reverses are very searching and stringent

tests. If you see a poor good man suddenly made rich, are you not a little afraid for him, though perhaps, in the same circumstances, you would have no fear for yourself? Do you not fear that he may lose his humility and spirituality of mind? that he will now mind earthly things? that he will indulge his senses? that his devotion to Christ may grow weaker now that he is bound to this world by ties so many and so pleasant? Are not these your fears, and have you not, in history and experience, only too good ground for them? On the other hand, if you see a rich “brother,” who has been successful in business, and for many years has lived in prosperity and ease, suddenly reduced to comparative poverty, or even to absolute want—if he has to “begin life again” when the strength and sanguine hopefulness of youth are past, do you not fear for him? Do you not fear that his piety may prove to have been only an adjunct of his prosperity? that his patience may fail him? that he may grow sour, irritable, fretful? that he may fail to see the good in the evil that has befallen him? that he may confound misfortune with disgrace, and lose his self-respect because it has pleased God to bring him down?

The most searching test in these great reverses is not commonly their direct, but their indirect, action. A man may have so much goodness and good sense that a sudden access of fortune would make little difference to him if he were alone, and yet it may pierce and try him to the very heart because others are with him. He may have a vulgar wife, fond of show, or children who will give themselves airs, or friends who flatter and fawn upon him, or servants whose solemn deference gives him a new sense of importance; and by all these subtle constant influences his own standard of thought and duty may be insensibly changed, lowered, depraved. And the other man, the rich man become poor, may be affected in a similar manner. To a sensible and good man outward changes are of little moment save as they affect character and usefulness. How many a good fellow have we all known to whom the hard work and comparative poverty of a reduced income have been a positive relief, and who would have snapped his fingers at “Fortune and her wheel” had he had no one to care for but himself, or had those for whom he had to care been like-minded with himself. But if he has a wife who frets and storms, or children who sulk and quarrel, then his trial may become most penetrating and severe. Our worst troubles, our sharpest griefs, are not often where men place them. Many a man would be modest and humble in good fortune, or constant and cheerful under ill fortune, were those who are nearest to him of as Christian a heart as he. But when those to whom we look for example, for comfort, for sympathy, fail us—if parents are angry when we need

their pity, or if children who ought to be our help become a burden—then we are poor and tried indeed.

Are we to rejoice in such trials as these? Yes, even in these, for these too test our character, and may help to make us perfect. St. James, indeed, speaks only of poverty and riches, but of course he includes under these terms whatever other changes they involve. And if a man find his kind pleasant wife of former days changed into a fine lady by prosperity, or into a shrew by penury; if a woman find her once kind and brave husband turned into a fretful poltroon by misfortune, or into a lazy sensualist by wealth, these sorrowful changes are part of the reverses which have come upon them—these are among the consequences of having been "lifted up" or "brought low," and in these also St. James bids us rejoice.

Now is it possible that any man should be sincerely glad to find himself penniless, for instance, with a wife and children about him whose prospects have been blighted, and whose tempers have been jarred into utter discord with his? Let us put the question in that plain practical way; for when the Lord Jesus bids us rejoice and be exceeding glad in tribulation and persecution, or St. James bids us count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, there is a stately roll about the words, and so many sacred associations cluster round them, that they sound remote from our daily life; and it is here, in our daily life, that we want to know our duty and get help to do it. Well, conceive as miserable a case as you can. Suppose a man reduced from affluence when his best days are past. Plague him with a scolding wife, or a lazy ne'er-do-well son, or an ailing fretful daughter, or all three of these: let his work be uncertain and ill paid; in short, load him with whatever you yourself most dread: and when the full dismal burden is upon him, could you go to him and say, "Be of good courage, sir, and let thine heart be glad; for blessed is the man who endureth trial, since, when he has been proved, he shall receive the crown of life?" You or I could not say that perhaps; we should have no heart to say it; but St. James says it plainly, heartily, and cheerfully. And to the poor souls who must bear the burden, which is the better comforter, you or I who can only be sorry for them, or St. James who is not one whit sorry for them, and can teach them not to be sorry for themselves? Surely St. James is the better comforter.

But before we can honestly give or take his comfort, we must occupy his position, we must hold his convictions, we must rise to the full height of our stature in Christ. St. James held that this world would soon pass away, and we still sooner from the world, but that there is another world in which we must live for ever, and in which our lot will be shaped by our character.

The chief aim of every man was, therefore, or should be, to form in himself a character which would fit him for the eternal life. It mattered very little whether he was rich or poor in things which he must soon leave behind him: what was of infinite importance was, that the spirit, which had to live for ever, should become perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Whatever changes of circumstance contribute to raise, purify, complete the spiritual character of the man should therefore be most welcome to him. If poverty would test and mature it, welcome poverty; if wealth, welcome wealth. The whole visible world, with all its kingdoms and treasures, was of worth to him just in proportion as it served to form in him a strong and holy character. Knowledge, wisdom, righteousness, charity, and the like graces were the chief things of life; all else was valuable as it developed these, and became worthless and pernicious so soon as it hindered or thwarted them.

These were St. James's views of human life—views which he had learned from Christ himself. And it is only when these views become our personal convictions that we can possibly attain that independence of outward conditions, that power of making all their changes subserve our true interests, which will enable the poor brother to rejoice that he is to be tested by wealth, and the rich brother that he is to be tried by poverty. In short, we can only do what St. James bids us do when our religion becomes a sacred reality, pervading our whole life, governing every thought, passion, aspiration of the soul. To too many of us, alas! our religion is like a stop in an organ, which we can pull out and shut off at our will. On Sunday mornings we pull it out, and for a time it discourses excellent music; but we push it in on Sunday evenings, and use it no more till the week has run out. Religion is only the *Sunday* stop in the organ of our life. We are not of those—

"With whom the melodies abide
Of th' everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

And till we rise into a higher life, into a religious life more real and deep, more constant and pervading, we cannot hope to attain that large freedom of the spirit for which neither opulence nor penury has any bonds. We who are not masters of ourselves if markets fall, how can we rejoice when we are brought low? If we would be lords of ourselves and of our fate, if we would be independent of outward conditions, if we would compel all changes and reverses to contribute to our good, we must learn to be in the world as Christ was in the world—in it, but not of it; we must seek first that kingdom of God which is within us; we must live as those who are to live for ever.

A SLEEPING BEAUTY.

GON a gently sloping ledge,
Backed by an untrimmed hawthorn hedge
Within an old oak's gen'rous shade,
Kind hands the little one had laid.

Her dimpled cheeks were round and fair,
And rich in curls her silky hair;
Her pretty pouting lips outvied
The scarlet poppy at her side.

Her form, embedded in the grass,
By daisy flowers surrounded was;
The kingcup, with a lordly grace,
Looked down upon the darling's face.

The honeysuckle overhead
For her the sweetest incense shed;
While from the clear unclouded sky
Dropped soul-entrancing minstrelsy.

The glories of that golden hour,
Light, scent, and sound, with mystic power,

About the little sleeper prest,
And blissful visions filled her rest.

Her countenance, beyond control,
The mirror of her sinless soul,
Told all the happiness she knew
In language eloquent as true.

And as on her I bent my gaze,
Came gliding from departed days,
Before my quickened mental sight,
Another form as fair and bright;

One who had long, long gone from me
To slumber 'neath the churchyard-tree,
But whose immortal soul above
Was singing of immortal love.

"God bless thee, little one," I spoke,
"And spare thee for thy parents' sake;
And when the last sleep seal thine eyes,
Join thou my Kate in Paradise."

JOHN G. WATTS.

THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY.

CHAPTER X.

GELL?" asked Harold Greyson, as he met Chatty. It was nearly dark, for he had kept her waiting some time, but the moon was up, and he could see that she was pale and anxious. "Well, dear, what is the matter?" and he seemed a little impatient.

"Oh! Harold," she said, taking his arm, "they've found it all out, and papa was so dreadfully angry, and told me to break it all off immediately."

He gave an exclamation of anger, for he thought of the annoyance the discovery would bring upon him.

"And, oh! he was never so angry in his life, and I am so unhappy;" and she looked up, waiting for him to say something to console her.

"How did it come out?" he asked.

"George Baylis told."

"George Baylis!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, how did he know anything about it?"

"He called you all sorts of names, and I told him——" she replied with more candour than caution.

"Oh!" he exclaimed crossly, "how silly of you, to be sure, Chatty."

"I am so sorry, Harold;" and her eyes filled with tears; "but I could not help it, I could not help standing up for you."

"Poor little girl," he said kindly, and she was satisfied again. "What do you mean to do?"

"Mean to do! how?"

"Do you mean to give me up? or——"

"Give you up! why, no; of course not. How could I?" and she looked up surprised that he should even think such a thing possible.

"I knew you would not," he said, in a kind tone, and he was in earnest enough then, for there was that in this girl's love which soothed even him, though he could not analyse it. "I knew you would not, dear," he said; "only stand by me, and you shall never be sorry for it."

"I know I never shall, and I don't mind their anger very much, for——" and she stopped, and he saw her looking up at him with unfaltering faith in his truth and love, and he was touched in spite of himself. He had been loved half-a-dozen times before, but not as this girl loved him, blindly, and with a readiness to stand by him through thick and thin.

"Chatty," he said, with a rush of real feeling, "I am not worthy of you—I am not indeed, dear; but if you will only trust me," he repeated, "you shall never repent it."

"I know that," she answered again, confidently, "and nothing in all the world shall make me flinch—Harold," she exclaimed, suddenly, determined to have one apprehension settled, "you don't care for Mrs. Spink, do you?"

"Mrs. Spink! what put that in your silly little head? why, no, of course not. She's only rather an agreeable woman, who knows how to talk amusing twaddle."



(Drawn by ROBERT BARNES.)

"God bless thee, little one"—p. 696.

"Yes, she is a flirt," said Chatty, with a great deal of glee, and a little bit of spite; "and she can only play and sing. She knows nothing about literature, and has not read any of the classics," and, forgetting how her reading had been put in the shade by Mrs. Day's sister, her thoughts went proudly back to the time when she struggled through the two translations previously mentioned in this chronicle, without understanding them in the least.

"I know she doesn't, dear," he answered with assumed gravity.

They walked on a little way without speaking, he thinking how this girl with her little beauty, and half education, and trifling vanity at having read some half-dozen books her sisters had not, yet had it in her power to give him a truer love than he had known before, and there was something in the knowledge that pleased him—he was so tired of being half loved. And Chatty walked by his side, humbly thinking that she had nothing in the world to be loved for, and making a thousand resolutions to do and learn all sorts of things to make him proud of her. "He is so grand-looking," she thought, "and so tall, and—oh, how can you?" and unconsciously she was speaking aloud.

"How can I what?" he asked.

"How can you love me?"

"Darling," he answered, looking in her face, "how can I help it?"

Then the Irrepressible appeared, and Chatty went home.

People were all amazed when they heard of Chatty's engagement.

"He can't care for her," said Mrs. Spink; "why, it was only the other day he was laughing at her. I believe the artilleryman likes her, though what he can see in her, I don't know."

"I'm so sorry, Miss Chatty," said Molly.

"What for?" asked Chatty, hoping to get some sympathy.

"For Captain George, miss."

"I can't bear Captain George; he's a nasty, mean thing. Mr. Greyson's worth fifty of him."

"No, miss, he doesn't care for you as the Captain does. I've watched him often. He may have been wrong to tell, but I don't believe he thought he was doing any harm."

"Every one seems to think George Baylis cares for me," she thought. "However, it would be impossible for me to speak to him again, after his conduct."

She had rather a hard time of it at home, and but that she feared Greyson's pride would stand in the way, would have made another attempt to get pupils in order to be independent; however, it would, she thought, only be for a month or two longer. Even that prospect, however, was not pleasant, for Mr. Deene would not speak to her, and Mrs. Deene grumbled at the constant squabbles in the house

whenever it was thought Chatty had seen or heard from Harold Greyson. Altogether, the harmony of the entire family was spoilt, and she knew herself to be the cause, and the others were not slow in reminding her of it. Mr. Deene, too, went the wrong way to mend matters. Every one knows that to tell a girl that she shall not marry a man when she has set her heart upon him, and to talk at and against him on every possible occasion, is precisely the way to make her all the more determined to do so, and in a fortnight's time she was much more in love than she probably ever would have been if things had been allowed to quietly take their course. Every now and then, too, some extra unpleasantness would arise, or the storm would break out afresh; yet she never once wavered, and Greyson, flattered and touched by her constancy, grew fonder of her, and this made up to her a thousand times for the troubles at home.

"It shall not be for much longer," he said one day; "we will be married in a couple of months or so, dear, and then I shall have the sole right of scolding you myself."

"Yes; but if you scold me, you will be certain to make it up, which is a comforting prospect. I get no end of scoldings now, but no makings up. I am sure I don't know what I should do but for Molly. The girls are kind to me, but they are afraid to say much because of papa; but Molly does all sorts of things for me—brings me my letters, helps me to come out, and is always trying indirectly to make peace. She's quite a blessing."

And, in truth, she was a blessing to Chatty, and soothed many a dreary half hour for her, and helped her out of many a scrape.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Chatty's engagement was two or three months old, Molly had a love-story of her own, and it was in this wise. One day there came a knock at the street-door—a modest single knock—and Molly went to answer it, never once thinking how important it would prove to her.

"I have brought home Mr. Deene's coat," said a shabby but genteel-looking young man, with, as Molly afterwards declared, the sweetest smile she had ever seen "off a picture or out of the waxwork."

"Wait a minute," said Molly, for he had handed her the bill and seemed to expect the money.

She went in, and presently returned with the amount.

"Thank you, miss," said the young man. He was standing on the doorstep, and in giving her the receipt he squeezed her hand.

"Sir!" exclaimed the properly indignant Molly, and she shut the door with an offended, but not very indignant, bang. Certainly Molly's powers were very much developed.

The youth might have been disappointed, but he was not despairing, as was evidenced by the fact that on the succeeding days, whenever she went on an errand, he was always, quite accidentally, in her way.

"Good evening, miss," he would at first content himself by saying, but the third time he met her he ventured to ask, "Is next Sunday your day out?"

"I shall go to church in the evening," answered Molly, impressively.

"Don't you sometimes go for a walk, miss?" asked he of the inquiring disposition.

"That depends," said Molly, looking down, but drawing herself up, and with that answer the swain had to be contented.

"I really can't think what is the matter with you, Molly," said Maria, who had been experimenting with some cheese cakes, which had failed, partly because they were an experiment, and partly because the handmaiden had neglected to attend to the oven. "I really think you must be in love."

"Lor! miss," answered Molly, "how can you say such things?" And she polished the tumblers very briskly. "Who was Dick Turpin?" she asked presently, apropos of nothing.

"Dick Turpin!" said Chatty, who liked to be considered an authority on literature of all kinds, "Why,

'Dick Turpin was a highwayman
Of very great renown.
He made love to all the ladies,
And he plundered all the town.'

And she drew a little closer to the fire, as Maria went up-stairs to explain how it was Molly's fault, and not hers, that the cheese cakes had not prospered. Chatty was fond of the fire, and she had taken to lingering a good deal down-stairs, since it had been so stormy above.

"Made love to all the ladies," repeated Molly. "I dare say he was rather a nice gentleman," she added presently.

"I shouldn't wonder," answered Chatty, meditating. "Whatever made you think of Dick Turpin, though?" she asked suddenly.

"I was wondering if any great people had been called Richard, miss, and I was thinking it's rather a nice name."

"Molly!" said Chatty, decidedly, "you are in love. Tell me all about it, Molly—now you are, are you not?"

After much coaxing, Molly told her all about it, and gave her her first love-letter to read, and when she had shyly looked to see that not a soul was listening at the top of the kitchen-stairs, Chatty read it aloud, for Molly had not managed to make out all the contents of it, and this was how it ran:—

"DEAR MISS.—I hope you will kindly excuse the liberty I take in writing to you, but you know I have always admired you for a long time. You must have seen how much I have admired you lately, and, indeed, I have long wished to have the pleasure of becoming better acquainted with you. Dear miss, I have a true and humble heart to offer you, and I shall be very glad if I am so happy as to win your true affections. If you

will listen to this you will be at the corner on Sunday, where you will be anxiously waited for by me. Hoping you are at present in good health, I am your admirer and sincere well-wisher,

"RICHARD WALBROOK."

"What shall you do, Molly? Shall you go?" Chatty asked.

"Well, miss," she answered, slowly, putting her head a little on one side, but speaking in a firm tone, "well, Miss Chatty, that depends."

"Depends upon what?"

"Upon how I feel, miss."

"You ought to go to a place of worship on a Sunday evening, Molly," Chatty said impressively, remembering that small household in the future, the management of which was to be such a wonder of correctness.

"Yes, miss, I suppose I ought," Molly answered, in the tone of a person perfectly aware that she knew what her duty was, also perfectly aware that she didn't intend to profit by the knowledge.

On the following Sunday Molly met her admirer and sincere well-wisher, and displayed her Prayer-book very carefully, and hoped she was not late, and was afraid she did not hear the bells.

"Can't I persuade you to take a walk instead of going to church, miss?"

"I always go to church," replied Molly, demurely; but she was persuaded nevertheless, and then that rash young man told Molly all about himself, how he was "a tailor by trade in a small way of business, and of his own, at Camden Town, and how he lived with his mother, who was weakly," and all the details of his domestic life, including an animated description of his garden, which produced everything, from chickweed to cucumbers. He wanted to move to the West End, he also informed her; it was more fashionable, though how the fashion would benefit him he did not explain. Then he asked Molly all sorts of questions about herself, and Molly answered them, walking under the tall trees in the Regent's Park, feeling very happy and looking very red.

"Won't you tell me your christian name?" asked Richard Walbrook, presently.

"It's Mary really, but mother always called me Molly—it's more affectionate-like—and the others do too, now," and for the first time Molly turned and looked at her sweetheart, and took in all the details of his appearance, from the blue tie with the white dots to the very shiny hat, which was so very evidently new.

"And mayn't I call you Molly, too?"

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, turning away her head, and trying to look over her left shoulder. He was walking on her right.

"Mayn't I?" he repeated, trying to follow her face and see it, but only succeeding in getting a close and very correct view of her back hair.

"I don't mind," she whispered, and that was how Molly's courting began.

"A tailor," thought Chatty, disappointedly, in the interests of Molly, after she had been most thoroughly enlightened on all that damsel knew of Richard's personal history. "I wish he had been something else. A tailor is a creature who sews and wears a thimble, so horridly womanish. Don't you wish he had been something else, Molly?"

"No, Miss Chatty," answered Molly, contentedly. "I wouldn't have minded if he had been a soldier under Captain George, though."

"I wish you would not talk about Captain George, Molly," she said in a severe tone; "and I wish you would not call Mr. Baylis, captain. He's only a lieutenant. Common people always call ensigns and lieutenants 'captain,' and it is so vulgar," and Chatty walked off slightly offended. "I really will not wear this absurd locket any longer," she said, tugging at the bit of velvet round her throat, as she went up-stairs. It's not fair to Harold, and I detest that George Baylis now. I'd send it back, only if I did he'd know I've kept it all this time."

Soon afterwards a day came which was Molly's holiday, and she went to Welling, and in the afternoon Richard fetched her, and had tea with Molly's mother, and explained his views generally, and took Molly home in the evening, treating her on the way to ices and chocolate and lemonade, all of which was afterwards, in strict confidence, told to Chatty.

"And are you quite well, after all that?" asked her hearer, wonderingly, when she heard of the astonishing performance.

"Yes, miss," answered Molly, slowly and thoughtfully, "only they was rather rich."

"I can't think why it is you don't take, Blanche," said Mrs. Day to her sister. They had left town, and were staying at their country-seat in Devonshire. "I can't think why it is, with all your money, and yet here you are, three-and-twenty, and I don't believe you ever had an offer."

"No," she said, looking drearily out of window, and absently repeating her sister's words, "never had an offer."

"And I thought you would have done something wonderful, with your decision of character—perhaps the men don't like so much decision."

"Perhaps not," replied Blanche, provokingly.

"I know Fred always says" (Fred was her husband) "that you ought to marry an easy sort of man, not too well off, who would let you be master."

"It would not be a bad idea," she replied in the same tone as before.

"I believe that is why he invited Harold Greyson down. He might do; he was attentive to you last year at Chiswick, and he's rather nice, though he's poor."

"Something must be done soon," said Greyson. "I'm getting frightfully hard up. I'll tell Brown he must wait till I return. I must write to Chatty before I go. Who's that? Come in. Oh, good morning, Mrs. Jones, you are looking better than ever. Pray sit down. I'm just off to Devonshire for a fortnight. Your account? Oh yes, I had overlooked it. We Government men are horribly paid, Mrs. Jones. It must stand over till I return. I may marry an heiress down in Devonshire, and if I do I'll send you up some clotted cream for the baby. Sorry to hear it's so much inconvenience to you. Oh, it isn't good for children. I didn't know. Very sorry. I shall be back on the first. Well, I can't help it, Mrs. Jones. I must really write my letters. Thank goodness, she's gone! I wonder how it would pay if I made up to Blanche Newby and her tin. I believe she'd have me—only there's Chatty. I must write to her. I'll do that at once, poor little girl, she's so fond of me. I'll tell her not to be disappointed, and all that sort of thing. I haven't time to see her again."

(To be continued.)

THE THREE KINGDOMS.

NE hot summer's day in June, I was sitting in the doorway that led from the drawing-room of the house into a conservatory full of sweet-smelling plants and flowers in bloom. The great heat of the weather predisposed me to slumber; and, in spite of the effort which I made to keep awake, I gradually fell into a trance-like reverie, in which the natural objects before me assumed strange shapes, and appeared to my eyes out of their true proportions.

Standing before me was an orange-tree in full leaf, but (whether owing to the backwardness of its growth, or to some other cause, I cannot say) it had as yet neither flower nor fruit. As I watched

the plant in my reverie, presently I thought I saw something moving at the foot of it; and, upon looking closer, I saw what appeared to be a number of men and women busily engaged in examining the branches of the tree. In another moment it seemed as if my eye had become microscopic in its powers of vision, for I could discern quite clearly what these people were doing. They took the branches and twigs one by one in their hands, or climbed up into the boughs, and then shook their heads to one another more in sorrow than in surprise, and said something which I could not at first distinguish. Presently their voices reached me; and by some mysterious power I was able to hear what they were saying. The words which they

muttered mournfully to one another were, "Not yet! not yet!" Still I was much puzzled to tell the object of their search. So, thinking it might be possible that, as I could see them and hear their voices, they would be able to hear me speak, I leaned down towards the tree, and addressed myself to one who seemed to be the leader of the rest, and asked what all this meant. Nor was I disappointed of an answer. He replied, "This is the Tree of Life; and we are looking for the buds of Promise." "And do you see the buds?" I inquired. "Not yet," he said, "but some of us who are wiser, can tell where they are likely to spring forth."

But here I could no longer keep my eyes open, and I fell into a deep sleep, still thinking of the strange things I had seen, and the words which I had heard. Thus, very naturally, my sleeping thoughts, borrowing their colour from the scene before me, took shape in a dream; of which all that I can remember is as follows:—

I dreamed that I was still sitting in my chair at the door of the conservatory, and the orange-tree was still before me; only now, I could see, everywhere it had put forth countless buds and flowers; many more of which, pure and beautifully white, were unfolding in the noonday sun. I turned to see what had become of my friends, who a little while ago (as it seemed) had been looking so eagerly for the blossoming of the tree. And then, first with my unaided sight, I saw a vast multitude, of all complexions and of every race, surrounding the tree with acclamations, and rejoicing in the beauty and sweet odour of its flowers. Presently, some more experienced than the rest were deputed to ascend the tree and pluck a few of the buds and flowers for those who wished to have them but could not climb the tree. I soon noticed that each one who received a bud or a flower first pressed it to his heart, and then placed it as a choice ornament somewhere in front of his dress, that others too might see its beauty. After a while I thought I could distinguish those who had got flowers from the rest, by the joy with which they went about to their friends showing their new treasure, and sometimes even unselfishly giving a petal or two away to one another. This went on for some time. Gradually, as the news spread that the orange-tree had blossomed, fresh crowds assembled at its foot, and a constant stream of ever fresh adventurers were found to climb the tree and gather buds and flowers for those who wanted them.

At length, suddenly, even while I gazed, the vision changed, and I could no longer see the people at the foot of the tree. All had passed away—those who had received the flowers, as well as the rest. But, I saw, the tree had not passed away; there it stood, now no longer flowering, but bearing rich fruit to ripen in the sun, which shone over-

head more glorious than ever. Almost instinctively I seized a telescope that lay by my side, and by its aid looking at the tree I discovered a brighter race of beings than I had before seen, all of them like sons of God, who were flying among the branches upon angels' wings, and tasting of the golden fruit. There was fruit on the tree more than enough for all; and each one was allowed to gather as much as he was capable of bearing away. I noticed that whether they gathered little or much, there was enough fruit still left for others, and that all alike were satisfied. But in the ecstasy of the joy which the sight of their pleasure gave me, suddenly I awoke, and found myself in tears; but these were not tears of grief, for I could not help rejoicing that the long waiting time of those eager watchers for the buds of promise had been at length rewarded, and that those fair flowers for which they looked, had borne such pleasant fruit.

Then in a moment (as so often happens), the dream passed away from before me, and the bright reality of all that I had seen stood before my mind's eye clear and unmistakable.

Had I not seen here a picture of some of God's dealings with men? 'Twas thus I reflected: God has kindly placed us in his conservatory, the Church, sheltered from the winds and storms of this world; and here before us he has set the Tree of Life to be at once our food, our lesson-book, and our guide to heaven. Still he has unfolded his purposes to man, not all at once, but gradually, by successive stages of revelation. First of all, to a chosen race of men he made known his righteous law, and gave the promise, and bade them look out for the advent of the Law-fulfiller, his own Son. So, for hundreds of years the Jewish nation eagerly expected the coming of the Messiah and their King; but that expectation was in their time never fulfilled: still, here one and there another by faith saw signs enough to assure them of the truth of God's promise. Such was the kingdom of law.

Next came the kingdom of grace—a period of favour, so far as God is concerned—a period too often of sinful rejection of that favour on the part of man. The Jews, who had been the first to expect, were among the last to appropriate as a nation the promised blessings. Yet, from among the Jews came those who first endeavoured, as messengers of the kingdom, to bring home to men's hearts the blessings of the Gospel. And thus the news spread. Nation after nation has come under the power of the truth. To people after people has the word been preached "for a witness." And this is still going on, and shall continue, till by-and-by the time appointed by the Father will have come. The kingdom of grace, in which we live, will then be ended. The kingdom of Jesus, laden with re-

wards for the faithful, like a tree laden with ripe fruits—the home of the blessed dead—the joy of angels—the accomplishment of the Divine purpose, the fulfilment of all God's promises—the kingdom of glory will begin.

Then, thought I, it is my privilege now, with the eye of faith and expectation, to watch for the dawning of that day, when Christ shall come into "his garden" with his bride, and "eat his pleasant fruits."

H. E. LEGH.

HOSPITAL STORIES.

AFEW days after Christmas, 1870, on the very grandest day for the little inmates in the whole year, namely, "The Treat-Day," and after the "Quiver" cot had been empty about a week, a little, gentle, timid girl, suffering from a painful internal disease, was admitted. Such a quiet, shy creature, with large, wistful eyes, full of touching endurance. She could not enter into the great and unwonted excitement that pervaded the wards all that eventful morning. Her arrival at the hospital (about which there had doubtless been much hoping and fearing and waiting at home), the strange faces, wonderful little white bed, clean sheets—"white counterpanes" are always talked over by the little Londoners as great curiosities—all these combined to bewilder little Flora. For a long time she sat on her mother's knee in the pretty ward, while doctors with kind looks and pleasant voices went from bed to bed, joking and chatting, and occasionally romping with their merry patients. Busy nurses flitted in and out, giving medicines and wine, or more often playthings, to their own special children (for *pets* are allowed in Great Ormond Street, and some are petted by two, or even *three* people).

After the form of admission had been gone through, and Flora's case thoroughly investigated, the nurse, in whose ward the "Quiver" cot stood, was called, and Flora given over to her charge. The little girl raised, as all of them usually do, a pair of very pitiful, searching eyes, to look well at her nurse's face. Something she sees there—something we *all* like to see, that there is, perhaps, no exact name for—makes a dimple come on each side of the little mouth, and though the eyes are full, very full, even to brimming over, because "there isn't a bed big enough for mother, so she must come again another day," the dimples keep their place bravely, and in a wonderfully short time, the thin little body, so soft and tender, is gently bathed in warm water, a clean little white gown and scarlet jacket put on, and little Flora has gone to Dreamland, to see more extraordinary things. The canary goes with her, for she hears him singing all the time.

While little Flora slept, several kind faces bent over her from time to time, questions were asked about the little new "Quiver," and laughing and talking went on round her amongst the children. Now and then snatches of carols, sung by some happy, though

weak little voice, mingled with the canary's singing in Flora's dream. At last the long morning is over, and the children shout to each other, "Twelve o'clock; dinner's coming!" Any child who is well enough to run about, helps the nurse to give round forks and spoons. The little bed-tables are cleared of toys, and the very smallest patients indulge in little squeaks of anticipation. The trays appear, tins of hot meat, cans of beef-tea, all sorts of puddings, fish, vegetables, sausages—for, as we are told, "Some are on fancy diet, and choose their own dinners." Then some one asks, "Please, nurse, what is little Flora on, in the 'Quiver' cot? Is she to have a fork or a spoon?" In a few minutes all are busy cutting up meat and serving out beef-tea, &c., till a lady says, "Now, little children, let us sing grace." That being over, a great noise of spoons and forks goes on, mingled with various more or less polite requests, according to the age of the child, or, more often perhaps, the time he or she has been in the hospital. For instance, "Please, nurse, I want a drink;" or, "More, more, more." Or sometimes is heard a dreadful little tale, "Nurse, nurse, Tommy's stealing my dinner!" Poor Tommy was troubled with a huge appetite, and never could be satisfied; also had no idea that might was not right. Occasionally Master Tom would tell his nurse with a calm face, that "Willie or Freddy had been naughty," and ask, "If he might have their pudding, 'cos he'd been good all the morning." The little girls are generally better behaved, and were always much amused to hear of naughty little Irish Tommy's tricks, and secretly enjoyed his impertinences. His remarks to visitors were the jokes of all the wards, and were retailed regularly by old to new patients. On one occasion a lady went into his ward, a very grand lady, fashionably dressed. Some flowers had been given just before to his nurse, and were arranged very tastily on the ward table. Saucy Tom (he was only three) looked at the lady, and put out his fat hand (never clean, in spite of constant trials on his nurse's part) and touched the lady's dress. "You've got yer best frock on, lady, aint yer?" "Hush, Tommy," whispered a lady nurse, "that's rude." "No, it aint," says Tommy, "she has got her best frock on, I know she has," and then we all laughed together. Then the lady remarked that the ward was a pretty one. "Yes," shouted the irrepressible child, "it's my ward." "And," continued

the lady, "you have *all* the flowers here, too." "That we aint," said the naughty child, his eyes full of Irish fun, "for you've got some in your bonnet." Tom's manners were given up at last as hopelessly bad, and, as his nurse said in a pathetic voice, "While everybody laughs at him, and the doctors encourage him, what can *I* do?" So Tommy ruled the ward, and when he descended into the convalescent room became the teachers' terror, by inventing and carrying out unheard-of pieces of mischief. He looked down with supreme contempt upon the "girls' ward," until it came near the time for the "treat," and then Tom began to change his key, and could be overheard telling the others that "the girls' ward was such a nice one, much better than the boys', more picshurs in it, and such nice nurses."

Dear old Tommy, he was more than a year in the hospital, and then went away just before the treat. But all this time we have left Flora. Very little of her beef-tea was taken at that first dinner. After all the plates, &c., were cleared away, a troop of little girls assembled in Flora's ward, as that was the most private. New comers were told of the wonders expected to take place "when it got dark." Magic-lantern and Christmas-tree, and lots of ladies and gentlemen come, and all the boys come down into our ward, and we all are going to have on new jackets and frocks, and we shall sing carols to the ladies and gentlemen." Little Flora and other new comers think the hospital more and more a wonderful place. Meantime evergreen wreaths are put up. The nurses get through wonderful arrangements of little cots in the front ward. The folding-doors are shut, and the ladies work as hard as hands will go at decorating the tree. The children are finally arranged two or three in each cot, all faces being towards the great folding-doors. The nurses have dressed themselves by magic, and now the new bright scarlet jackets appear, and blue ribbons for the girls. Little cheeks get very pink, and eyes look wonderfully bright. Intense excitement prevails. The boys' ward nurses carry down their little patients with great care and tenderness. Little benches are placed in front for those who are up and dressed. The boys lose their shyness and hazard remarks to the girls, as to what all the ladies are doing. Three o'clock tea is suggested, and the fun of having tea two in a bed highly appreciated. The bigger boys get rather uproarious. One little demure girl suggests that "if they aint quiet, they won't get no presents." This is quite a new idea. "If they are quiet will they really get *presents*?" How jolly! Will everybody get one?" "Nurse, will I?"—and I? Oh, I say, won't there be a lot of presents! This is fun!" Such a rubbing of hands, and upsetting of mugs in consequence. And now the tea is over, the tree is finished. Visitors begin to arrive; not strangers, only kind friends who come

to help in any way they can, and who thoroughly enjoy seeing such a beautiful and wonderful sight. By the time tea is cleared away, and the beds straightened, it is almost dark. The large doors are still closed. Not a glimpse can be got of the magic tree or the "presents," which, by-the-bye, are now talked of as things of course by all the children. Then is heard a mysterious hammering behind the big folding-doors, and the children hug each other in their glee. "What can it be?" A nurse tells them that the men are getting the lovely pictures ready to show them. In a few more minutes the ladies appear again among them, and one is asked by a small boy, patronisingly, "If they've done the tree up nice?" He is told "Beautiful! and there are plenty of little candles on it, too." "Hooray!" is his comment.

More visitors. No seats for them. The excitement gets to a great height. Mr. Cremer's men are begged to be quick, and a lady sets the children off singing carols. One is sung through with much spirit and sweetness; another begins, when the doors open, and a large white square of soft light appears. Not another sound. They are all dumb with delight.

Suddenly a lovely picture is before them, and then they find their voices. The wee mites clap tiny hands, and the elder children look about for their own special nurses to enjoy it with them. It is a pretty sight to watch the crowd of thin, eager, and in most instances, lovely little faces, full of wonder or delight, as picture after picture fades away, and there are more to be seen, and even when they are done there is that wonderful tree. One little girl took hold of my hand, and laying back from sheer weariness of pleasure said, in a most lackadaisical tone, "Oh, lady, isn't it lovely?" But all the poor darlings could not join in the beautiful sight; some were too ill to be moved, both of girls and boys. By turns ladies and nurses slipped out to watch over these little sufferers, telling them as much or little as they would care to know of the doings and sayings of their friends. Little Flora, fortunately, was not among the quiet ones, and though decidedly quiet herself, enjoyed the fun, and made friends with several, in her own way. Everything has an end, and "Good Night" appeared just at the right moment. A little more carol singing. All the candles lighted, then more fun. The sheet suddenly disappears, and behold a fairy tree! Shrieks of joy, and children who seem bandaged too tightly to move, are actually bounding about in ecstasy. "Oh! aint the ladies bin a-working hard!" says a wise, practical old man of six. "If I could have that blue doll," says a little girl about the same size; "what a beauty she is, and a pork-pie hat on, too!" Of course she gets it. A nice present for each child has been prepared beforehand, and ticketed with his or her name. This causes fresh wonder, for oddly

enough every child seems to get "just what they wanted."

Watching the candles burn down is great fun. Presently an inquisitive child catches sight of two marvellous pink tubs. "What can *they* be?" A kind lady, one of the kindest friends the children have, who finds time among her own numerous duties, and with a large family of dear children herself, to do a great deal of work for the hospital, has sent the two gay tubs full of lovely little gifts. The delightful idea of *fish*ing among the cool bran for what they may get, is by no means the least pleasure of the evening's treat, and the kind hearts, heads, and fingers that planned and carried out the amusement would have been well rewarded indeed, if they had but seen the intense happiness their thoughtful kindness caused, not only at the time, but afterwards, when the children wiled away long hours by going over and over again the pleasures of that night. The children who were in the other wards had the tubs carried round to them, and in their less noisy way, were equally happy. If the dear boys and girls who gave their time and money those Christmas holidays to make up those nice presents should ever read these words, I hope they will be quite sure that their efforts to please the little sick children were most successful. One dear little boy, whom I have seen in the wards giving away his own picture-books—dear, unselfish little fellow—would, I am sure, have been delighted to see the fun they had over opening the parcels. God loves to see little children happy, and how easy it is to make them so, even when they are sick and suffering. But the last candle has burnt down. The beauty of the fairy tree has departed. The children are far too happy, each with its own special possession, to mind that. Sleepy little forms, wearied with very happiness, are carried carefully back to bed, to enjoy their treat over again with variations, in that remarkable land of dreams which every happy child can enter, the poor as well as the rich. Those who were in their own beds, were just wheeled into their accustomed corner. Flora had quite a long ride. The new jackets were taken off and folded away for future grand occasions, and within an hour of the highest pitch of excitement, gentle snores were to be heard, proceeding from little toy-laden cots. Every one had entered with a will into the "clearing-up," and the wards soon regained their usual orderly and comfortable appearance. One by one the kind visitors departed, leaving kind wishes for the nurses' enjoyment of *their* annual treat, which takes place on the same night, the ladies meanwhile taking charge of the wards and house; and well both servants and nurses deserve their pleasure. Each one is given some sensible present, and a warm wrap, which to a nurse is very useful during the long, cold nights of watching. A good supper is

provided, and thoroughly appreciated, but no company is invited. In themselves they make a goody party, and manage to make a fair amount of noise. Every one contributes to the evening's entertainment by singing a song, the choosing and learning of which is an important affair beforehand, and last year a concertina was introduced, and in consequence, the evening was still more harmonious.

THE QUIVER COT AND ITS OCCUPANT.

WE have been requested to state that photographs of the above may be supplied to any of our readers, who will forward for that purpose six postage stamps and a stamped addressed envelope to "the Secretary of the Hospital for Sick Children, 49, Great Ormond Street, W. C."—ED. Q.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

228. Can any reason be assigned for Reuben and Gad joining in the request they made of Moses to be left behind when the other tribes passed over Jordan?

229. How is the fact accounted for that Moses gave to the sons of Merari twice as many oxen and wagons as to the sons of Gershom for their respective services connected with the tabernacle?

230. In connection with what event is "unleavened bread" first mentioned in the Bible?

231. Mention the miracles recorded to have been wrought by St. Paul, and the place in which each was performed.

232. Quote a passage in which David is expressly called a prophet.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 672.

214. Ps. lxxiv. 8. "Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land."

215. For a prophet rebuking the nation, see Judges vi. 8; and rebuking an individual, see 1 Sam. ii. 27–36.

216. Jehoiada. See 2 Chron. xxiv. 15, 16.

217. Amaziah. See 2 Chron. xxv. 6.

218. John vi. 30, 31. "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness."

219. John v. 46. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."

220. Pilate's wife. See Matt. xxvii. 19. "I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

221. Elijah stretched himself on the child of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 21); Elisha stretched himself on the Shunammite's child (2 Kings iv. 34); St. Paul stretched himself on Eutychus (Acte xx. 10).

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